

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS, COMMONLY CALLED, THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

^a 2 Sam. 8. 2.
^b ch. 3. 5.

^c Josh. 13. 3.

^d See Zech.
13. 4.
Matt. 3. 4.

CHAP. 1. THEN Moab ^arebelled against Israel ^bafter the death of 2 Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* Now therefore thus saith the LORD, *Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.* And Elijah departed. ¶ And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, 6 Why are ye now turned back? And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And he said unto them, ²What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet you, and told you these 8 words? And they answered him, *He was* ²an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, *It is*

¹ Heb. *The bed whither thou art gone up, thou shalt not come down from it.*

² Heb. *What was the manner of the man.*

I. 1. The Moabites, who had once lorded over Israel (Judg. iii. 12-14), were reduced to subjection by David, and treated with extreme severity (marg. ref.). In the time of Ahab they were dependent on the kingdom of Israel, to which it has been generally supposed that they fell at the separation of Israel from Judah. The Moabite monument (see iii. 4), discovered in 1869, has now given reason to believe that they then recovered their independence, but were again reduced by Omri, who, with his son Ahab, is said (in round numbers) to have "oppressed" them for "forty years." Ahab's death was seized upon as an occasion for revolt, and Moab (perhaps owing to Ahaziah's sickness) easily regained her independence.

2. *a lattice*] The "upper chamber" had probably a single latticed window, through which Ahaziah fell. Windows in the East are to this day generally closed by lattices of interlaced wood, which open outwards; so that, if the fastening is not properly secured, one who leans against them may easily fall out.

Baal-zebub] Lit. "Lord (i.e., averter) of

flies." Flies in the East constitute one of the most terrible of plagues (Ps. cv. 31; Ex. viii. 24); and Orientals would be as likely to have a "god of flies" as a god of storm and thunder. To enquire (v. 3) of Baal-zebub was practically to deny Jehovah. Ahaziah cast aside the last remnant of respect for the old religion, and consulted a foreign oracle, as if the voice of God were wholly silent in his own country.

For Ekron see marg. ref.

4. *therefore, &c.*] As a punishment for this insult to Jehovah.

8. *an hairy man*] Either in allusion to his shaggy cloak of untanned skin; or, more probably, an expression descriptive of the prophet's person, of his long flowing locks, abundant beard, and general profusion of hair. His costume was that of a thorough ascetic. Generally the Jews wore girdles of linen or cotton stuff, soft and comfortable. Under the girdle they wore one or two long linen gowns or shirts, and over these they had sometimes a large shawl. Elijah had only his leathern girdle and his sheepskin cape or "mantle."

- 9 Elijah the Tishbite. ¶ Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight. And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. ¶ And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. ¶ So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

• Luke 9. 54.

1 Sam. 26.
21.
Ps. 72. 14.

¹ Heb. bowed.

² The second year that Jehoram

was Prorox, and the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat, ch. 3. 1.

9. Then the king sent unto him] i.e., in order to seize and punish him. Cp. 1 K. xviii. 10, xxii. 27.

10. The charge of cruelty made against Elijah makes it needful to consider the question: What was Elijah's motive? And the answer is:—Simply to make a signal example, to vindicate God's honour in a striking way. Ahaziah had, as it were, challenged Jehovah to a trial of strength by sending a band of fifty to arrest one man. Elijah was not Jesus Christ, able to reconcile mercy with truth, the vindication of God's honour with the utmost tenderness for erring men, and awe them merely by His Presence (cp. John xviii. 6). In Elijah the spirit of the Law was embodied in its full severity. His zeal was fierce; he was not shocked by blood; he had no softness and no relenting. He did not permanently profit by the warning at Horeb (1 K. xix. 12 note). He continued the uncompromising avenger of sin, the wielder of the terrors of the Lord, such

exactly as he had shown himself at Carmel. He is, consequently, no pattern for Christian men (Luke. ix. 55); but his character is the perfection of the purely legal type. No true Christian after Pentecost would have done what Elijah did. But what he did, when he did it, was not sinful. It was but executing strict, stern justice. Elijah asked that fire should fall—God made it fall; and, by so doing, both vindicated His own honour, and justified the prayer of His prophet.

17. The similarity of names in the two royal houses of Israel and Judah at this time, and at no other, seems to be the consequence of the close ties which united the two reigning families, and is well noted among the "undesigned coincidences" of the Old Testament. The accession of the Israelite Jehoram (Ahab's brother) took place, according to iii. 1, in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. Jehoram of Judah perhaps received the royal title from his father as early as his father's sixteenth year,

^a Gen. 5. 24.^b 1 Kin. 19. 21.^c See Ruth
1. 15, 16.^d 1 Sam. 20.

3, 25, 26.

ch. 4. 30.

^e 1 Kin. 20. 35.

ver. 5, 7, 15.

ch. 4. 1, 38.

& 9. 1.

CHAP. 2. AND it came to pass, when the LORD would ^a take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with ^b Elisha 2 from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, ^c Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said ^d unto him, ^e As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not 3 leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el. And ^e the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know ^f it; 4 hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not 5 leave thee. So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know ^f it; 6 hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave 7 thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood ^g to view afar off: and they two stood 8 by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and ^h they were divided hither and

^f So Ex. 11.

21.

Josh. 3. 16.

ver. 14.

^g Heb. in sight, or, once against.

when he was about to join Ahab against the Syrians; the same year might then be called either the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat or the second of Jehoram.

II. 1. The events of this chapter are related out of their chronological order. Elijah's translation did not take place till after the accession of Jehoram in Judah (2 Chr. xxi. 12), which was not till the fifth year of Jehoram of Israel (viii. 16). The writer of Kings, having concluded his notices of the ministry of Elijah in ch. i., and being about to pass in ch. iii. to the ministry of Elisha, thought it best to insert at this point the final scene of Elijah's life, though it did not occur till several years later.

[*Gilgal*] The modern *Jiljilich*, on the highland between Nablous and Beitin (Bethel), about eight and a half miles from the latter, is now commonly supposed to be the Gilgal here mentioned. Some regard it as the ordinary residence of Elisha (iv. 38).

2. *Tarry here*] Elijah's motive in making this request is not clear. Perhaps he thought that so awful and sacred a scene as that which he was led to expect (v. 9), should be kept as secret as possible.

[*the LORD hath sent me to Bethel*] Elijah may have been directed to Bethel, because of the "School of the Prophets" there, that the sight of him—if not his words—might console and encourage them before they lost him for ever.

[*as the LORD liveth, &c.*] This double oath, repeated three times (rr. 4, 6), is very re-

markable. The two clauses of it are separately used with some frequency (see Judg. viii. 19; Ruth iii. 13; 1 Sam. i. 26, &c.), but it is comparatively seldom that they are united (see marg. ref.).

3. [*came forth to Elisha*] It does not appear that any interchange of speech took place between "the sons of the Prophets" (see marg. ref. note) and Elijah; but independent revelations had been made to the two "schools" at Bethel and Jericho (r. 5), and also to Elisha, with respect to Elijah's coming removal.

[*from thy head*] i.e. from his position as teacher and master. The teacher sat on an elevated seat, so that his feet were level with the heads of his pupils (cp. Acts xxii. 3).

[*hold ye your peace*] i.e. "Say nothing—disturb us not. The matter is too sacred for words."

7. [*fifty men of the sons of the prophets*] We see by this how large were the prophetic schools. It is implied that the "fifty" were only a *portion* of the school of Jericho. They ascended the abrupt heights behind the town, whence they would command a view of the whole course of the river and of the opposite bank for many miles.

8. [*they were divided, &c.*] The attestation to the divine mission of Elijah furnished by this miracle would tend to place him upon a par in the thoughts of men with the two great leaders of the nation named in the marg. ref.

- 9 thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. ¶ And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, 'Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.
- 11 ¶ And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* ^a a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, ^b My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the ² bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. ¶ And when the sons of the prophets which *were* ^c to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty ³ strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: 'lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon ⁴ some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.
- 17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not? ¶ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I

^a ch. 6. 17.
Ps. 104. 4.

^b ch. 13. 14.

¹ ver. 8.

² ver. 7.

³ See 1 Kin.
18. 12.
Ezek. 8. 3.
Acts 8. 30.

¹ Heb. *Thou hast done hard in asking.*

² Heb. *lip.*

³ Heb. *sons of strength.*

⁴ Heb. *one of the mountains.*

9. *let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me*] Like Solomon, Elisha asks for no worldly advantage, but for spiritual power to discharge his office aright. The "double portion" is that which denotes the proportion of a father's property which was the right of an eldest son (Deut. xxi. 17). Elisha therefore asked for twice as much of Elijah's spirit as should be inherited by any other of the "sons of the Prophets." He simply claimed, *i.e.*, to be acknowledged as Elijah's *firstborn* spiritual son.

10. It would be better to omit the words "when I am," which are not in the original. The sign was to be Elisha's seeing the actual translation, which he did (*v.* 12).

11. *Elijah went up, &c.*] No honest exegesis can explain this passage in any other sense than as teaching the translation of Elijah, who was taken from the earth, like Enoch (Gen. v. 24), without dying. Cp. Eccles. xlviii. 9.

12. *the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof*] These difficult words are probably said of Elijah, whom Elisha addresses as

"the true defence of Israel, better than either the chariots or horsemen" which he saw. Hence his rending his clothes in token of his grief.

14. *Where, &c.*] Some prefer, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah, *even he*? And when he had smitten, &c." Or, according to others, "now when he, &c." Elisha's smiting of the waters seems to have been tentative. He was not sure of its result. Hence the form of his invocation—"Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Is He here—*i.e.*—with me, or is He not?" Answered by the event, he appears never subsequently to have doubted.

16. Cp. marg. *reff.* The words "cast him upon some mountain," rather imply that they expected to find the Prophet alive.

17. *till he was ashamed*] *i.e.* to refuse them any longer.

19. *the water is naught*] *i.e.* "bad," and the ground barren] Translate "and the land apt to miscarry." The stream was thought to be the cause of untimely

pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord
 20 seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground ¹barren. And
 he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And
 21 they brought *it* to him. And he went forth unto the spring
 of the waters, and ^mcast the salt in there, and said, Thus
 saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be
 22 from thence any more death or barren *land*. So the waters
 were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha
 23 which he spake. ¶ And he went up from thence unto Beth-el:
 and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little
 children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him,
 24 Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he
 turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the
 name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of
 25 the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. And he
 went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned
 to Samaria.

^m See Ex.
 15. 25.
 ch. 4. 41.
 & G. G.
 John 9. G.

^a ch. 1. 17.

CHAP. 3. NOW ^aJehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over
 Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of
 2 Judah, and reigned twelve years. And he wrought evil in the
 sight of the LORD, but not like his father, and like his mother:
 for he put away the ²image of Baal ^bthat his father had made.
 3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto ^cthe sins of Jeroboam the son of
 Nobat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.
 4 ¶ And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered

^a 1 Kin. 10.
 31, 32.
^c 1 Kin. 12.
 23, 31, 32.

¹ Heb. causing to miscarry.

² Heb. statue.

births, abortions, and the like, among the cattle, perhaps also among the people, that drank of it.

20. The "new cruse" and the "salt" are evidently chosen from a regard to symbolism. The foul stream represents sin, and to cleanse it emblems of purity must be taken. Hence the clean "new" dish previously unused, and thus untainted; and the salt, a common Scriptural symbol of incorruption (see Lev. ii. 13; Ezek. xliii. 24; Matt. v. 13, &c.).

21. *the spring of the waters*] The spring intended is probably that now called Ains-Sultan, which is not much more than a mile from the site of the ancient town. It is described as a large and beautiful fountain of sweet and pleasant water. The springs issuing from the eastern base of the highlands of Judah and Benjamin are to this day generally brackish.

23. As Beth-el was the chief seat of the calf-worship (1 K. xii. 32, 33, xiii. 1-32), a Prophet of Jehovah was not unlikely to meet with insult there.

by the way] i.e. "by the usual road," probably that which winds up the Wady Suweinit, under hills even now retaining some trees, and in Elisha's time covered with a dense forest, the haunt of savage animals. Cp. 1 K. xiii. 24; and for the general prevalence of beasts of prey in the country, both earlier and later than this, see Judg. xiv. 5; 1 Sam. xvii. 34; 2 K. xvii. 25; Am. v. 19, &c.

24. On this occasion only do we find Elisha a minister of vengeance. Perhaps it was necessary to show, at the outset of his career as a Prophet, that he too, so mild and peaceful could, like Elijah, wield the terrors of God's judgments (1 K. xix. 19 note). The persons really punished were, not so much the children, as the wicked parents (v. 23), whose mouth-pieces the children were, and who justly lost the gift of offspring of which they had shown themselves unworthy.

25. *Carmel*] Where Elisha held gatherings for religious purposes (iv. 23-25) during one period of his life, if he did not actually reside there.

III. 1. *in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat*] This date agrees exactly with the statements that Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fourth year of Ahab (1 K. xxii. 41), and Ahaziah in the 17th of Jehoshaphat (do. v. 51).

2. On the "evil" wrought by Ahab, see especially 1 K. xvi. 30-34. Jehoram, warned by the fate of his brother (i. 4 note), began his reign by a formal abolition of the Phœnician state religion introduced by Ahab—even if he connived at its continuance among the people (x. 26, 27); and by a re-establishment of the old worship of the kingdom as arranged by Jeroboam.

4. Moab, the region immediately east of the Dead Sea and of the lower Jordan, though in part suited for agriculture, is in the main a great grazing country. Mesha resembled a modern Arab Sheikh, whose

unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand "lambs, and an
 5 hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass,
 when "Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against
 6 the king of Israel. ¶ And king Jehoram went out of Samaria
 7 the same time, and numbered all Israel. And he went and sent
 to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab
 hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab
 to battle? And he said, I will go up: *I am as thou art*, my
 8 people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses. And he said,
 Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through
 9 the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the
 king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a com-
 pass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the
 10 host, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of
 Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings
 11 together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But "Jehosh-
 aphat said, *Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may*
enquiro of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's
 servants answered and said, *Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat,*

^a See Isa. 16.

1.

^a ch. 1. 1.

¹ 1 Kin. 22. 4.

¹ 1 Kin. 22. 7.

¹ Heb. *at their feet*, See Exod. 11. 8.

wealth is usually estimated by the number of his flocks and herds. His tribute of the wool of 100,000 lambs was a tribute in kind, the ordinary tribute at this time in the East.

Mesha is the monarch who wrote the inscription on the "Moabite stone" (i. 1 note). The points established by the Inscription are—1. That Moab recovered from the blow dealt by David (2 Sam. viii. 2, 12), and became again an independent state in the interval between David's conquest and the accession of Omri; 2. That Omri reconquered the country, and that it then became subject to the northern kingdom, and remained so throughout his reign and that of his son Ahab, and into the reign of Ahab's son and successor, Ahaziah; 3. That the independence was regained by means of a war, in which Mesha took town after town from the Israelites, including in his conquests many of the towns which, at the original occupation of the Holy Land, had passed into the possession of the Reubenites or the Gadites, as Baal-Meon (Num. xxxii. 38), Kirjathaim (do. 37), Ataroth (do. 34), Nebo (do. 38), Jahaz (Josh. xiii. 18), &c.; 4. That the name of Jehovah was well known to the Moabites as that of the God of the Israelites; and 5. That there was a sanctuary of Jehovah at Nebo, in the Trans-Jordanic territory, where "vessels" were used in His service.

7. The close alliance between the two kingdoms still subsisted. Jehoram therefore sends confidently to make the same request with respect to Moab that his father had made two years before with respect to Syria (marg. ref.). Jehoshaphat consented at once, notwithstanding that his former compliance had drawn upon him the rebuke of a Prophet (2 Chr. xix. 2). Perhaps Jeho-

ram's removal of the Baal-worship (v. 2) weighed with him. He had himself been attacked by the Moabites in the preceding year; and though the attempt had failed, Jehoshaphat would feel that it might be renewed, and that it was important to seize the opportunity of weakening his enemy which now offered itself.

8. The readiest and most natural "way" was across the Jordan near Jericho into the Arboth-Moab, and then along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea to Moab proper, the tract south of the Arnon. But the way chosen was that which led to the Edomite country, viz., round the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and across the Arabah, or continuation of the Jordan and Dead Sea valley. Thus would be effected a junction with the forces of Edom, which had resumed its dependence on Judah, though the year before it had been in alliance with Moab (2 Chr. xx. 22); and they would come upon the Moabites unprepared.

9. *seven days' journey*] The distance of the route probably followed is not much more than 100 miles. But the difficulties of the way are great; and the army might not be able to move along it at a faster rate than about 15 miles a day.

no water] The kings had probably expected to find sufficient water for both men and baggage animals in the Wady-el-Ahsy, which divides Edom from Moab, and which has a stream that is now regarded as perennial. But it was dried up—quite a possible occurrence with any of the streams of this region.

11. *a prophet of the LORD*] i.e. of Jehorah. It was necessary to inquire thus definitely, as there were still plenty of prophets who were only prophets of Baal (v. 13).

- 12 which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom ^awent down to him.
- ^b Ezek. 11. 3. 13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, 'What have I to do with thee? ^cget thee to ^dthe prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to
- ^e 1 Kin. 18. 19. 14 deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, ^fAs the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I
- ^g 1 Kin. 17. 1. 15 would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me
- ^h See 1 Sam. 10. 5. 16 that ⁱthe hand of the LORD came upon him. And he said, Thus
- ^j Chr. 25. 1—3. 17 saith the LORD, ^kMake this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink,
- ^l Ezek. 1. 3. & 3. 14, 22. 18 both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is ^mbut a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moab-
- ⁿ & 8. 1. 19 its also into your hand. And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and ^omar every good piece of land with stones.
- ^p Chr. 4. 3. 20 ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, when ^qthe meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom,
- ^r Ex. 29. 29. 40.

¹ Heb. *gricce*.

Here is Elisha] Jehoram appears to have been ignorant of his presence with the host, and one of his "servants," or officers, answered Jehoshaphat's inquiry.

which poured water] An act signifying ministrations or attendance (cp. John xiii. 5 seq.).

13. Jehoram's humility in seeking (r. 12) instead of summoning Elisha, does not save him from rebuke. His reformation (r. 2) had been but a half reformation—a compromise with idolatry.

Nay: for the LORD hath called, &c.] The force of this reply seems to be—"Nay, reproach me not, since I am in a sore strait—and not only I, but these two other kings also. The Lord—Jehovah—is about to deliver us into the hand of Moab. If thou canst not, or wilt not help, at least do not reproach."

15. Music seems to have been a regular accompaniment of prophecy in the "schools of the Prophets" (marg. ref.), and an occasional accompaniment of it elsewhere (Ex. xv. 20).

16. ditches] Or "pits" (Jer. xiv. 3). They were to dig pits in the broad valley or wady, wherein the water might remain, instead of flowing off down the torrent course.

17. No rain was to fall where the Israelites and their enemies were encamped; there was not even to be that all but universal accompaniment of rain in the East, a sudden rise of wind (cp. 1 K. xviii. 45; Ps. cxlvii. 18; Matt. vii. 25).

cattle, and your beasts] The former are the

animals brought for food. The latter are the baggage animals.

19. ye shall fell every good tree] This is not an infringement of the rule laid down in Deut. xx. 19, 20. The Israelites were not forbidden to fell the fruit trees in an enemy's country, as a part of the ravage of war, when they had no thoughts of occupying the country. The plan of thus injuring an enemy was probably in general use among the nations of these parts at the time. We see the destruction represented frequently on the Assyrian monuments and mentioned in the inscriptions of Egypt.

and stop all wells of water] The stoppage of wells was a common feature of ancient, and especially Oriental, warfare (cp. Gen. xxvi. 15-18).

mar...with stones] The exact converse of that suggested in Isai. v. 2. The land in and about Palestine is so stony that the first work of the cultivator is to collect the surface stones together into heaps. An army marching through a land could easily undo this work, dispersing the stones thus gathered, and spreading them once more over the fields.

20. when the meat offering was offered] i.e. about sunrise, when the morning sacrifice was offered. Cp. 1 K. xviii. 29.

there came water by the way of Edom] The Wady-el-Ahsey drains a considerable portion of northern Edom. Heavy rain had fallen during the night in some part of this tract, and with the morning a freshet of water came down the valley, filling the pits.

21 and the country was filled with water. And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they ¹gathered all that were able to ²put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as red as blood*: and they said, This *is* blood: the kings are surely ³slain, and they have smitten 24 one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but ⁴they went 25 forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country. And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: ⁵only in ^{*}Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and 26 smote it. ¶ And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: 27 but they could not. Then ^{*}he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: [†]and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

CHAP. 4. NOW there cried a certain woman of the wives of [†]the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come [†]to take unto him my two sons

¹ Heb. *were cried together.*
² Heb. *gird himself with a girdle.*

³ Heb. *destroyed.*
⁴ Or, *they smote in it even smiting.*

⁵ Heb. *until he left the stones thereof in Kir-haraseth.*

^{*} Isai. 16. 7, 11.

^{*} Mic. 6. 7.

[†] ch. 8. 20.

[†] 1 Kin. 20. 35.

[†] See Lev. 25. 39. Matt. 18. 25.

21. and stood in the border] On the north side of the wady, ready to defend their territory.

23. The sun had risen with a ruddy light, as is frequently the case after a storm (cp. Matt. xvi. 3), nearly over the Israelite camp, and the pits, deep but with small mouths, gleaming redly through the haze which would lie along the newly moistened valley, seemed to the Moabites like pools of blood. The preceding year, they and their allies had mutually destroyed each other (2 Chr. xx. 23). It seemed to them, from their knowledge of the jealousies between Judah, Israel, and Edom, not unlikely that a similar calamity had now befallen their foes.

25. Kir-Haraseth, also Kir-Hareseth, is identified almost certainly with the modern Kerak, a strong city on the highland immediately east of the southern part of the Dead Sea. It was the great fortress of Moab, though not the capital, which was Rabbath or Rabbah. It was an important stronghold at the time of the Crusades, and is still a place of great strength. Kir seems to have meant "fortress." It is found in Cir-cesium, Car-chemish, &c.

Kir-Haraseth resisted all the attempts to dismantle it; but the slingers found

places on the hills which surrounded it, whence they could throw their stones into it and harass the garrison, though they could not take the town.

26. *to break through, even unto the king of Edom*] Either because he thought that the king of Edom would connive at his escape or to take vengeance on him for having deserted his former allies (c. 8 note).

27. Cp. marg. ref. Mesha, when his sally failed, took, as a last resource, his first born son, and offered him as a burnt-offering to appease the manifest anger of his god Chemosh, and obtain his aid against his enemies. This act was thoroughly in accordance with Moabitish notions.

and there was great indignation against Israel] Either the Israelites were indignant with themselves, or the men of Judah and the Edomites were indignant at the Israelites for having caused the pollution of this sacrifice, and the siege was relinquished.

IV. 1. *the creditor is come, &c.*] The Law of Moses, like the Athenian and the Roman law, recognised servitude for debt, and allowed that pledging of the debtor's person, which, in a rude state of society, is regarded as the safest and the most natural security (see marg. ref.). In the present case it would seem that, so long as the

- 2 to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of 3 oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy 4 neighbours, *even* empty vessels; ¹ borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou 5 shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the* 6 vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is not a vessel more.* And 7 the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy ² debt, and live thou and 8 thy children of the rest. ¶ And ³ it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to ⁴ Shunem, where *was* a great woman; and she ⁴ constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he 9 passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man 10 of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall 11 be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. ¶ And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the 12 chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood 13 before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among 14 mine own people. And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her 15 husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, ⁵ About this ⁵ season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And

¹ See ch. 3. 16.

⁴ Josh. 10. 13.

⁵ Gen. 13. 10. 14.

¹ Or, *scant not*.
² Or, *creditor*.

³ Heb. *there was a day*.

⁴ Heb. *laid hold on him*.
⁵ Heb. *set time*.

debtor lived, the creditor had not enforced his right over his sons, but now on his death he claimed their services, to which he was by law entitled.

2. *a pot of oil*] Or, "an anointing of oil"—so much oil, *i.e.*, as would serve me for one anointing of my person. The word used occurs only in this passage.

8. *And it fell on a day*] The original of the expression here used, which occurs three times in the present narrative (xx. 11, 18), is also found in Job i. 6, 13, ii. 1. The character of the expression perhaps supports the view that the author of Kings has collected from various sources his account of the miracles of Elisha, and has kept in each case the words of the original writer.

a great woman] That is, "a rich woman." Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 2; 2 Sam. xix. 32.

10. *a little chamber on the wall*] The room probably projected like a balcony beyond

the lower apartments—an arrangement common in the East.

a stool] Rather, "a chair." The "chair" and "table," unusual in the sleeping-rooms of the East, indicate that the Prophet was expected to use his apartment for study and retirement, not only as a sleeping-chamber.

13. *thou hast been careful for us*] For the Prophet and his servant, who must have been lodged as well as his master.

I dwell among mine own people] The woman declines Elisha's offer. She has no wrong to complain of, no quarrel with any neighbour, in respect of which she might need the help of one in power. She "dwells among her own people"—her friends, and dependents, with whom she lives peaceably.

16. *do not lie*] Cp. a similar incredulity in Gen. xvii. 17, xviii. 12; Luke i. 20. The expression, "do not lie," which is harsh to us, accords with the plain, straightforward simplicity of ancient speech. It would

she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, *do* not lie unto thine
 17 handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that
 season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of
 18 life. ¶ And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he
 19 went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his
 father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to
 20 his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to
 21 his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died. And
 she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and
 22 shut *the door* upon him, and went out. And she called unto her
 husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men,
 and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and
 23 come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to
 day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It*
 24 *shall be* well. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant,
 Drive, and go forward; ¹slack not *thy* riding for me, except I
 25 bid thee. So she went and came unto the man of God ²to mount
 Carmel. ¶ And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her
 afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is*
 26 that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say
 unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it* well with thy husband? *is*
 27 *it* well with the child? And she answered, *It is* well. And
 when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught ³him
 by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the
 man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within
 her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.
 28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? ⁴did I not say,
 29 Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins,
 and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet
 any man, ⁵salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him

1 ver. 23.

2 ch. 2. 25.

4 ver. 16.

1 Kin. 18. 46.
ch. 9. 1.

5 Luke 10. 4.

¹ Heb. *peace*.² Heb. *restrain not for me to ride*.³ Heb. *by his feet*, Matt. 28. 9.⁴ Heb. *utter*, 1 Sam. 1. 10.

not mean more than "deceive" (cp. marg. ref.).

19. The child's malady was a sunstroke. The inhabitants of Palestine suffered from this (Ps. cxxi. 6; Isai. xlix. 10; Judith viii. 3).

22. *send me, I pray thee, one of the young men and one of the asses*] All the "young men" and all the "asses" were in the harvest field, the young men cutting and binding the sheaves, and placing them upon carts or wains, the asses drawing these vehicles fully laden, to the threshing-floor. Cp. Amos ii. 13.

23. Her husband did not connect the illness with his wife's demand, but thought she wished to attend one of the Prophet's devotional services. It is evident that such services were now held with something like regularity on Carmel for the benefit of the faithful in those parts.

new moon] By the Law the first day of each month was to be kept holy. Offerings were appointed for such occasions (Num. xxviii. 11-15), and they were among the days on which the silver trumpets were to be blown (Num. x. 10; Ps. lxxxi. 3). Hence "new moons" are frequently joined with

"sabbaths" (see Isai. i. 13; Ezek. xlv. 17; Hos. ii. 11; 1 Chr. xxiii. 31).

it shall be well] Rather, as in the margin, "Peace." i.e., "Be quiet—trouble me not with inquiries—only let me do as I wish."

24. *slack not thy riding*] Translate, "delay me not in my riding, except I bid thee." The servant went on foot with the ass to urge it forward, as is the ordinary custom in the East.

25. The distance was about sixteen or seventeen miles.

27. *she caught him by the feet*] To lay hold of the knees or feet has always been thought in the East to add force to supplication, and is practised even at the present day. Cp. Matt. xviii. 29; John xi. 32.

28. Great grief shrinks from putting itself into words. The Shunammite cannot bring herself to say, "My son is dead;" but by reproaching the Prophet with having "deceived" her, she sufficiently indicates her loss.

29. *salute him not*] Cp. marg. ref. Salutation is the forerunner of conversation, and one bent on speed would avoid every temptation to loiter.

lay my staff upon the face of the child] Per-

¹ See Ex. 7.
19. & 14. 16.
ch. 2. 8. 14.
Acts 19. 12.
² ch. 2. 2.

³ John 11. 11.

⁴ ver. 4.
Matt. 6. 6.
⁵ 1 Kin. 17.
20.

⁶ 1 Kin. 17.
21.
Acts 20. 10.

⁷ 1 Kin. 17.
21.
⁸ ch. 8. 1, 5.

⁹ 1 Kin. 17.
23.
¹⁰ ch. 2. 1.
¹¹ ch. 8. 1.
¹² ch. 2. 3.
Luke 10. 39.
Acts 22. 3.

¹³ Ex. 10. 17.
¹⁴ See Ex. 15.
25.
ch. 2. 21.
& 5. 10.
John 9. 6.

¹ Heb. *attention*.

² Heb. *once hither, and once thither*.

haps Elisha's object in giving it was simply to assuage the grief of the mother, by letting her feel that something was being done for her child.

31. *there was neither voice nor hearing*] Cp. 1 K. xviii. 29.

the child is not awakened] See v. 20. The euphemism by which death is spoken of as a sleep was already familiar to the Jews (see 1 K. i. 21 note).

33. *prayed*] Prayer was the only remedy in such a case as this (cp. marg. ref. and Jam. v. 16), though it did not exclude the use of other means (v. 34).

34. *he stretched himself*] Or, "prostrated himself." The word is a different one from that used of Elijah, and expresses closer contact with the body. Warmth may have been actually communicated from the living body to the dead one; and Elisha's persistence (Heb. xi. 35), may have been a condition of the child's return to life.

36. *Take up thy son*] Compare Elijah's action (marg. ref. 4) and our Blessed Lord's (Luke vii. 15).

38. *there was a dearth in the land*] Rather, "The famine was in the land." The seven

30 not again: and ¹lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, ²*As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And he arose, and followed her.

31 ¶ And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor ¹hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying,

32 The child is ²not awakened. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He ³went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain,

34 ⁴and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and ⁵he stretched himself

35 upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house ⁶to and fro; and went up, ⁷and stretched himself upon him: and ⁸the child sneezed

36 seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, ⁹Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and ¹⁰took up her son, and went out. ¶ And Elisha

came again to ¹¹Gilgal: and *there was* a ¹²dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* ¹³sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage

39 for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of

40 pottage: for they knew *them* not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, *there*

41 *is* ¹⁴death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*. But he said, Then bring meal. And ¹⁵he cast *it* into the pot; and he

years' dearth of which Elisha had prophesied (marg. ref.) had begun.

the sons of the prophets] See 1 K. xx. 35 note. They were sitting before him as scholars before their master, hearing his instructions.

39. *a wild vine*] Not a real wild vine, the fruit of which, if not very palatable, is harmless; but some climbing plant with tendrils. The plant was probably either the *Ecbatium claterium*, or "squirting cucumber," the fruit of which, egg-shaped, and of a very bitter taste, bursts at the slightest touch, when it is ripe, and squirts out sap and seed grains; or the *Colocynthis*, which belongs to the family of cucumbers, has a vine-shaped leaf, and bears a fruit as large as an orange, very bitter, from which is prepared the drug sold as colocynth. This latter plant grows abundantly in Palestine.

his lap full] Literally, "his shawl full." The prophet brought the fruit home in his "shawl" or "outer garment."

41. *Then bring meal*] The natural properties of meal would but slightly diminish either the bitterness or the unwholesome-

said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there
 42 was no ¹harm in the pot. ¶ And there came a man from ^bBaal-
 shalisha, ^cand brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits,
 twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn ²in the husk
 thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.
 43 And his servitor said, ^dWhat, should I set this before an hun-
 dred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat:
 for thus saith the LORD, ^eThey shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*.
 44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, ^fand left *thereof*, ac-
 cording to the word of the LORD.

CHAP. 5. NOW ^gNaaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria,
 was ^ha great man ⁱwith his master, and ^jhonourable, because
 by him the LORD had given ^kdeliverance unto Syria: he was
 2 also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper*. And the
 Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away cap-
 tive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she ^lwaited on
 3 Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God
 my lord were ^mwith the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would
 4 ⁿrecover him of his leprosy. And *one* went in, and told his lord,
 saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.
 5 ¶ And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter

^b 1 Sam. 9. 4.

^c 1 Sam. 9. 7.

^d 1 Cor. 9. 11.

^e Gal. 6. 6.

^f Luke 9. 13.

^g John 6. 9.

^h Luke 9. 17.

ⁱ John 6. 11.

^j Matt. 1. 4. 20.

^k & 15. 37.

^l John 6. 13.

^m Luke 4. 27.

ⁿ Ex. 11. 3.

¹ Heb. evil thing.

² Or, in his scrip, or, gar-
ment.

³ Heb. before.

⁴ Or, gracious.

⁵ Heb. lifted up, or, ac-
cepted in countenance.

⁶ Or, victory.

⁷ Heb. was before.

⁸ Heb. before.

⁹ Heb. gather in.

ness of a drink containing colocynth. It is evident, therefore, that the conversion of the food from a pernicious and unsavoury mess into palatable and wholesome nourishment was by miracle.

42. *Baal-shalisha*] Fifteen Roman miles north of Lydda, in the Sharon plain to the west of the highlands of Ephraim. It was, apparently, the chief city of the "land of Shalisha" (marg. ref.).

bread of the first fruits] It appears by this that the Levitical priests having withdrawn from the land of Israel (see 2 Chr. xi. 13, 14), pious Israelites transferred to the Prophets, whom God raised up, the offerings required by the Law to be given to the priests (Num. xviii. 13; Deut. xviii. 4).

in the husk thereof] "In his bag." The word does not occur elsewhere in Scripture.

43. This miracle was a faint foreshadowing of our Lord's far more marvellous feeding of thousands with even scantier materials. The resemblance is not only in the broad fact, but in various minute particulars, such as the distribution through the hands of others; the material, bread; the surprised question of the servant; and the evidence of superfluity in the fragments that were left (see marg. ref.). As Elijah was a type of the Baptist, so Elisha was in many respects a type of our Blessed Lord. In his peaceful, non-ascetic life, in his mild and gentle character, in his constant circuits, in his many miracles of mercy, in the healing virtue which abode in his bodily frame (xiii. 21), he resembled, more than any

other Prophet, the Messiah, of Whom all Prophets were more or less shadows and figures.

V. 1. *by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria*] An Assyrian monarch had pushed his conquests as far as Syria exactly at this period, bringing into subjection all the kings of these parts. But Syria revolted after a few years and once more made herself independent. It was probably in this war of independence that Naaman had distinguished himself.

but he was a leper] Leprosy admitted of various kinds and degrees (Lev. xiii. xiv.) Some of the lighter forms would not incapacitate a man from discharging the duties of a courtier and warrior.

2. No peace had been made on the failure of Ahab's expedition (1 K. xxii. 1-36). The relations of the two countries therefore continued to be hostile, and plundering incursions naturally took place on the one side and on the other.

4. *one went in*] Rather, "he went in," i.e. Naaman went and told his lord, the king of Syria.

5. *six thousand pieces of gold*] Rather, "six thousand shekels of gold." Coined money did not exist as yet, and was not introduced into Judæa till the time of Cyrus. Gold was carried in bars, from which portions were cut when need arose, and the value was ascertained by weighing. If the gold shekel of the Jews corresponded, as some think, to the daric of the Persians, the value of the 6000 shekels would be about 68377. If the weight was the same as that of the silver

^c 1 Sam. 9. 8.
ch. 8. 8, 9.

^d Gen. 30. 2.
Deut. 32. 39.
1 Sam. 2. 6.

^e 3eech. 4. 41.
John 9. 7.

unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and ¹took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am I* ⁴God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. ¶ And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and ¹wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, ²³I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and ¹strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not ⁴Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

¹ Heb. *in his hand*.

² Heb. *I said*.

³ Or, *I said with myself, He will surely come out, &c.*

⁴ Heb. *more up and down*.
⁵ Or, *Amama*.

shekel (see Ex. xxxviii. 24 note), the value would exceed 12,000*l*.

The ancient practice of including clothes among gifts of honour in the East (Gen. xli. 42; Esth. vi. 8; Dan. v. 7) continues to the present day.

6. *that thou mayest recover him*] Lit. "And thou shalt recover him." The Syrian king presumes that, if there is a cure for leprosy to be had in Israel, the mode of obtaining it will be well known to his royal brother.

7. *he rent his clothes*] The action indicated alarm and terror quite as much as sorrow (2 Sam. xiii. 19; Ezr. ix. 3; 2 Chr. xxxiv. 27; Jer. xxxvi. 22).

consider, I pray you] Jehoram speaks to his chief officers, and bids them mark the *animus* of the Syrian monarch. Compare the conduct of Ahab (1 K. xx. 7).

8. *he shall know... Israel*] viz. "That which thou (the king of Israel) appearest to have forgotten, that there is a Prophet—a real Jehovah P-rophet—in Israel."

10. Elisha was not deterred from personally meeting Naaman because he was a leper. He sent a messenger because Naaman had over-estimated his own importance (v. 11), and needed rebuke.

go and wash in Jordan] Cp. marg. reff.

A command is given which tests the faith of the recipient, and the miracle is not wrought until such faith is openly evidenced.

11. *he will surely come out to me*] In the East a code of unwritten laws prescribes exactly how visits are to be paid, and how visitors are to be received, according to the worldly rank of the parties (cp. r. 21). No doubt, according to such a code, Elisha should have gone out to meet Naaman at the door of his house.

and call on the name of the Lord his God] Literally, "of Jehovah his God." Naaman is aware that *Jehovah* is the God of Elisha. Cp. the occurrence of the name of Jehovah on the "Moabite Stone" (iii. 4 note).

strike] Better, as in the margin, "pass the fingers up and down the place" at a short distance. It seems implied that the leprosy was partial.

12. The Abana is the Barada, or true river of Damascus, which, rising in the anti-Libanus, flows westward from its foot and forms the oasis within which Damascus is placed. The Pharpar is usually identified with the Awnaj.

Naaman thinks that, if washing is to cure him, his own rivers may serve the purpose. Their water was brighter, clearer, and colder than that of Jordan.

- 14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God : and ^fhis flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and ^ghe was clean. f Job 33. 25.
g Luke 4. 27.
- 15 ¶ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him : and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* ^hno God in all the earth, but in Israel : now
- 16 therefore, I pray thee, take ⁱa blessing of thy servant. But he said, ^kAs the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, ^lI will receive
- 17 none. And he urged him to take ^mit ; but he refused. And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth ? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods,
- 18 but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and ⁿhe leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon : when I bow down myself in the house of
- 19 Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him ^oa little
- 20 way. ¶ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought : but, *as* the LORD
- 21 lieth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So h Dan. 2. 47.
& 3. 29.
i Gen. 28. 27.
k Gen. 33. 11.
l 1 Kin. 17. 1.
m Gen. 14. 23.
n See Matt. 10. 8.
o ch. 7. 2, 17.

¹ Heb. *a little piece of ground*, as Gen. 35. 16.

14. *seven times*] Cp. 1 K. xviii. 43. In both cases a somewhat severe trial was made of the individual's faith. Cp. the seven compassings of Jericho, and the sudden fall of the walls (Josh. vi. 3-20).

15. *he returned*] Naaman was grateful' (cp. Luke xvii. 15). From the Jordan to Samaria was a distance of not less than thirty-two miles. Naaman further went to Damascus, far out of his way, lengthening his necessary journey by at least three days. His special object in returning seems to have been to relieve his feelings of obligation by inducing the Prophet to accept a "blessing," i.e. a gift.

there is no God, &c.] Cp. marg. reff. ; but in none of them are the expressions quite so strong as here. Naaman seems absolutely to renounce all belief in any other God but Jehovah.

16. *I will receive none*] The Prophets were in the habit of receiving presents from those who consulted them (1 Sam. ix. 7, 8 ; 1 K. xiv. 3), but Elisha refused. It was important that Naaman should not suppose that the Prophets of the true God acted from motives of self-interest, much less imagine that "the gift of God might be purchased with money" (Acts viii. 20).

17. *two mules' burden of earth*] This earth, Naaman thought, spread over a portion of Syrian ground, would hallow and render it suitable for the worship of Jehovah.

18. Rimmon is known to us as a god only by this passage. The name is connected with a root "to be high." Hadad-rimmon (Zech. xii. 11), the name of a place near

Megiddo, points to the identity of Rimmon with Hadad, who is known to have been the Sun, the chief object of worship to the Syrians.

when he leaneth on mine hand] The practice of a monarch's "leaning on the hand" of an attendant was not common in the East (cp. marg. reff.). It probably implied age or infirmity.

the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing] Naaman was not prepared to offend his master, either by refusing to enter with him into the temple of Rimmon, or by remaining erect when the king bowed down and worshipped the god. His conscience seems to have told him that such conduct was not right ; but he trusted that it might be pardoned, and he appealed to the Prophet in the hope of obtaining from him an assurance to this effect.

19. *so he departed, &c.*] This clause should not be separated from the succeeding verse. The meaning is, "So he departed from him, and had gone a little way, when Gehazi bethought himself of what he would do, and followed after him."

20. *this Syrian*] The words are emphatic. Gehazi persuades himself that it is right to spoil a Syrian—that is, a Gentile, and an enemy of Israel.

as the LORD liveth] These words are here a profane oath. Gehazi, anxious to make himself believe that he is acting in a proper, and, even, in a religious spirit, does not scruple to introduce one of the most solemn of religious phrases.

Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, ¹*Is all well?* And he said, *All is well.* My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him. And when he came to the ²tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went ³no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence ^aa leper as white as snow.

ⁿ 1 Tim. 6. 10.

^o Ex. 4. 6.

Num. 12. 10.

ch. 15. 5.

^a ch. 4. 38.

CHAP. 6. AND ^athe sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. 3 And he answered, Go ye. And one said, Be content, I pray

¹ Heb. *Is there peace?*

² Or, *secret place.*

³ Heb. *not hither or thither.*

21. *he lighted down from the chariot*] This was an act of quite uncalled-for courtesy. It indicates eagerness to honour the master in the person of his servant.

22. *from mount Ephraim*] Bethel and Gilgal (ii. 1), at both of which there were "schools of the prophets," were situated on Mount Ephraim.

a talent of silver] A large demand in respect of the pretended occasion; but small compared with the amount which Naaman had pressed on the Prophet (r. 4). Gehazi had to balance between his own avarice, on the one hand, and the fear of raising suspicion on the other.

23. *Be content*] i.e. "consent."

24. *the tower*] Rather, "the hill," the well-known hill by Elisha's house. The hill interrupted the view in the direction taken by Naaman, and Gehazi dismissed Naaman's servants at this point lest they should be seen from his master's residence.

25. Lest his absence should be noticed, Gehazi hastened, without being called, to appear before his master. In the East it is usual for servants to remain most of the day in their lord's presence, only quitting it when given some order to execute.

26. *Went not mine heart with thee?*] i.e. "Was I not with thee in spirit—did I not see the whole transaction, as if I had been present at it?" He uses the verb "went," because Gehazi has just denied his "going."

Is it a time, &c.] i.e. "Was this a proper occasion to indulge greed, when a Gentile was to be favourably impressed, and made to feel that the faith of the Israelites was the only true religion? Was it not, on the contrary, an occasion for the exhibition of the greatest selfishness, that so a heathen might be won to the truth?"

and oliveyards and vineyards, &c.] Gehazi's thoughts had probably run on to the disposition which he would make of his wealth, and the Prophet here follows them, enumerating his servant's intended purchases.

VI. 1. The writer returns here to the series of miracles which Elisha performed for the benefit of the prophetic schools under his care. The connexion, in this point of view, is with iv. 44.

the place where we dwell with thee] Lit. "the place where we sit before thee," i.e. "the place where we assemble and sit to hear thy teaching." Elisha visited the sons of the Prophets in circuit, staying a short time at each place where a "school" was established. Perhaps he was now visiting Jericho. Cp. ii. 5.

2. *take every man a beam*] Trees were rare in most parts of Palestine, but plentiful in the Jordan valley. Jericho was known in early times as "the city of palms" (Deut. xxxiv. 3; Judg. i. 16).

thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.
4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they
5 cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the ¹axe head
fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it
6 was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And
he shewed him the place. And ²he cut down a stick, and cast it ³in
7 in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it
8 up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it. ¶ Then the
king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his
servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be my* ⁴camp.
9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying,
Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians
10 are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which
the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved him-
11 self there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king
of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his
servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of
12 us *is* for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said,
⁵None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in
Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in
13 thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I
may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold,
14 *he is* in ⁶Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, ⁷Gen. 37. 17.
and a ⁸great host: and they came by night, and compassed the
15 city about. And when the ⁹servant of the man of God was
risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city
both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him,
16 Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear
not: for *they that be with us* are more than they that *be* with

¹ Heb. iron.
² Or, encamping.

³ Heb. No.
⁴ 1st ch. Ecry.

⁵ Or, minister.

⁶ 2 Chr. 32. 7.
1st s. 55. 18.
Item. 8. 31.

5. *the axe head*] Lit. as in margin. The Jews used iron for the heads of axes at a very early date (see Deut. xix. 5). They probably acquired a knowledge of the smelting process in Egypt, where iron was employed at least from the time of the third

Rameses.
6. No doubt there is something startling in the trivial character of this miracle, and of the few others which resemble it. But, inasmuch as we know very little as to the laws which govern the exercise of miraculous powers, it is possible that they may be so much under their possessor's control that he can exercise them, or not exercise them, at pleasure. And it may depend on his discretion whether they are exercised in important cases only, or in trivial cases also. Elisha had evidently great kindness of heart. He could not see a grief without wishing to remedy it. And it seems as if he had sometimes used his miraculous power in pure good nature, when no natural way of remedying an evil presented itself.

8. *the king of Syria*] Probably the great Benhadad (see r. 24).

10. *saved himself*] Rather, he "was

ware." The verb used is the same which is translated "beware" in the preceding verse.

11. Benhadad supposed that there must be a traitor in his camp. He asks therefore, "Will no one denounce him?"

12. *in thy bedchamber*] Lit. "in the secret place of thy bedchamber," i.e. "in the greatest possible secrecy." The seclusion of the harem must be taken into account for the full appreciation of the force of the phrase. Probably the Syrian lord who answered Benhadad had received his intelligence from some of the Israelites.

13. *Dothan*] See marg. ref. note. It was at no great distance from Shechem. Its ancient name still attaches to a Tel or hill of a marked character (cp. r. 17), from the foot of which arises a copious fountain.

16. *they that be with us*, &c.] Elisha gave utterance to the conviction of all God's Saints when the world persecutes them (cp. marg. ref.). God—they know—is on their side; they need "not fear what flesh can do unto them." His Angels—an innumerable host—are ever guarding those who love Him.

ε ch. 2. 11.
P's. 31. 7.
& Gs. 17.
Zech. 1. 8.
& 6. 1-7.
/ Gen. 19. 11.

σ Rom. 12. 20.

A ch. 5. 2.
ver. 8, 9.

- 17 them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.
- 18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of
- 19 Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they
- 21 were in the midst of Samaria. And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them?
- 22 shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before
- 23 them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.
- 24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.

¹ Heb. come ye after me.

17. *open his eyes that he may see*] Elisha's servant lacked the faith of his master. Elisha therefore prays that he may be given a vision of the spiritual world, and see, as if with the bodily eye, the angelic host (marg. ref.) which he himself knows to be present.

18. *they came down to him*] The Syrians, who had been encamped on rising ground opposite the hill of Dothan, now descended and drew near to the city.

The blindness with which they were smitten was not real blindness—actual loss of sight—but a state of illusion in which a man sees things otherwise than as they are (cp. v. 20).

21. *My father*] A term of respect used by Jehoram in his joy at seeing an army of Syrians delivered up to him by the Prophet. That the king's character was not changed appears from *vr.* 31, 32.

shall I smite them? shall I smite them?] The repetition of the words mean, "Shall I utterly smite them?" (cp. similar repetitions with similar meanings in Gen. xxii. 17; Luke xxii. 15).

22. *wouldest thou smite, &c.*] It is doubtful whether this sentence is really interrogative. Others translate—"Smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword," &c. A contrast is intended between ordinary captives—those made with the sword and bow—and these particular prisoners who have

been given into the king's hand by God. The former, Jehoram is told, he may slay, if he pleases (Deut. xx. 13), the latter, he is informed, he must not slay (cp. marg. ref.).

23. Jehoram did not merely follow the letter of the Prophet's direction, but understood its spirit and acted accordingly. The plundering bands which had been in the habit of ravaging the territory (v. 2), ceased their incursions in consequence either of the miracle, or of the kind treatment which Elisha had recommended.

24. *after this*] Perhaps some years after—when the miracle and the kind treatment were alike forgotten.

25. As the ass was "unclean," it would not be eaten except in the last resort; and its head would be its worst and cheapest part.

cab] This measure is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. According to the Rabbinical writers it was the smallest of all the dry measures in use among the Jews, being the sixth part of a *seah*, which was the third part of an *ephah*. If it was about equal to two of our quarts, the "fourth part of a cab" would be about a pint.

dove's dung] Most commentators understand by this expression a sort of pulse, which is called "dove's dung," or "sparrow's dung" in Arabic. But it is possible that the actual excrement of pigeons is

26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there
 27 cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And
 he said, ¹If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?
 28 out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king
 said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman
 said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we
 29 will eat my son to-morrow. So ²we boiled my son, and did
 eat him: and I said unto her on the ³next day, Give thy son, that
 30 we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. And it came to
 pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he ⁴rent
 his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people
 looked, and, behold, *he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.*
 31 Then he said, ⁵God do so and more also to me, if the head of
 32 Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day. But
 Elisha sat in his house, and ⁶the elders sat with him; and *the*
king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came
to him, he said to the elders, "See ye how this son of "a mur-
derer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the mes-
senger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is
 33 *not the sound of his master's feet behind him? And while*

¹ Lev. 26. 29.
 Deut. 28. 53,
 57.

² 1 Kin. 21.
 27.

³ 1 Kin. 10. 2.

⁴ Ezek. 8. 1.
 & 20. 1.

⁵ Luke 13. 32.
⁶ 1 Kin. 16. 4.

¹ Or, *Let not the Lord save thee.*

² Heb. *other.*

meant. The records of sieges show that both animal and human excrement have been used as food—under circumstances of extreme necessity.

26. The walls of fortified towns had a broad space at the top, protected towards the exterior by battlements, along which the bulk of the defenders were disposed, and from which they hurled their missiles and shot their arrows. The king seems to have been going his rounds, to inspect the state of the garrison and the defences.

27. *If the LORD do not help* The translation in the text is decidedly better than the marginal rendering. Some prefer to render—"Nay—let Jehovah help thee. Whence shall I help thee?"

out of the barnfloor, &c. The king means that both were empty—that he had no longer any food in store; and therefore could not help the woman. (cp. Hos. ix. 2.)

28. The king had assumed that the cry of the woman was for food. Her manner indicated that it was not so. He therefore proceeded to inquire what she wanted of him.

this woman Both women, it would seem, were present; and the aggrieved one pointed to the other.

29. The prophecy alluded to in the marg. ref. was now fulfilled, probably for the first time. It had a second accomplishment when Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (Lam. iv. 10), and a third in the final siege of the same city by Titus.

30. *sackcloth* Jehoram hoped perhaps to avert Jehovah's anger, as his father had done (1 K. xxi. 29). But there was no spirit of self-humiliation, or of true penitence in his heart (v. 7). See the next verse.

31. *God do so, &c.* Jehoram uses almost

the very words of his wicked mother, when she sought the life of Elijah (marg. ref.).

the head of Elisha Beheading was not an ordinary Jewish punishment. The Law did not sanction it. But in Assyria, Babylonia, and generally through the East, it was the most common form of capital punishment. It is not quite clear why Elisha was to be punished. Perhaps Jehoram argued from his other miracles that he could give deliverance from the present peril, if he liked.

32. *But Elisha sat, &c.* Translate, "And Elisha was sitting in his house, and all the elders were sitting with him, when the king sent, &c."

The "elders,"—either "the elders of the city" or "the elders of the land,"—who may have been in session at Samaria now, as they had been at the time of a former siege (1 K. xx. 7)—had gone to Elisha for his advice or assistance. Their imminent peril drove them to acknowledge the power of Jehovah, and to consult with His Prophet.

this son of a murderer i.e. of Ahab, the murderer, not only of Naboth, but also of all the Prophets of the Lord (marg. ref.), whom he allowed Jezebel to slay.

hold him fast at the door The elders, public officials, not private friends of Elisha, could not have been expected to resist the entrance of the executioner at the mere request of the Prophet. He therefore assigns a reason for his request—"the king is coming in person, either to confirm or revoke his order—will they detain the headsman until his arrival?"

33. *the messenger* It has been proposed to change "messenger" into "king," the two words being in Hebrew nearly alike, and the speech with which the chapter ends being considered only suitable in the mouth of the

- he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; ^awhat should I wait for the LORD any longer?
- ^r Job 2. 9.
- ^a ver. 18, 19.
- ^b ver. 17.
ch. 5. 18.
^c Mal. 3. 10.
- ^d Lev. 13. 46.
- ^e 2 Sam. 5. 21.
ch. 19. 7.
Job 15. 21.
1 Kin. 10. 29.
- CHAP. 7. THEN** Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, ^a"To morrow about this time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a 2 shekel, in the gate of Samaria. ^bThen ^ca lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, ^d*if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt 3 not eat thereof. ¶ And there were four leprous men ^eat the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit 4 we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall 5 live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, 6 behold, *there was* no man there. For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians ^fto hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us ^gthe kings

¹ Heb. *a lord which belonged to the king leaning upon his hand*, ch. 5. 18.

king, whose presence is indicated in vii. 2, 17. Others think that the words "and the king after him" have fallen out of the text. *came down*] The messenger came down from off the wall to the level of the streets.

Behold this evil, &c.] Jehoram bursts into the Prophet's presence with a justification of the sentence (r. 31) he has pronounced against him. "Behold this evil—this siege with all its horrors—is from Jehovah—from Jehovah, Whose Prophet thou art. Why should I wait for Jehovah—temporise with Him—keep, as it were, on terms with Him by suffering thee to live—any longer? What hast thou to say in arrest of judgment?"

VII. 1. The division between the chapters is most awkward here. Elisha, in this verse, replies to the king's challenge in vi. 33—that his God, Jehovah, will give deliverance in the space of a day. On the morrow, by the same time in the day, the famine will have ceased, and food will be even cheaper than usual.

a measure of fine flour] Lit. "a *seah* of fine flour;" about a peck and a half. *for a shekel*] About 2s. 8½d.

two measures of barley] Or, "two *seahs* of barley;" about three pecks.

In the gate] The "gates," or "gateways," of Eastern towns are favourite places for the despatch of various kinds of business. It would seem that at Samaria one of the gates was used for the corn market.

2. *a lord*] Rather, "the captain," as in Ex. xiv. 7; 1 K. ix. 22; &c. The term itself, *shalish* (derived from *shalosh*, "three,") may be compared with the Latin "tribunus."

windows] Rather, "sluices" (cp. Gen. vii. 11). The "lord" means to say—"If Jehovah were to open sluices in heaven, and pour down corn as He poured down rain in the time of the Deluge, even then could there be such abundance as thou speakest of?"

3. The position of the lepers is in accordance with the Law of Moses (marg. refl.); and shows that the Law was still observed to some extent in the kingdom of Israel.

5. *the twilight*] The evening twilight (see r. 9).

the uttermost part of the camp] The extreme boundary of the camp towards the city, not its furthest or most distant portion. Cp. r. 8.

6. It is a matter of no importance whether we say that the miracle by which God now wrought deliverance for Samaria consisted in a mere illusion of the sense of hearing (cp. vi. 19, 20); or whether there was any objective reality in the sound (cp. marg. refl.).

the king of Israel hath hired] The swarms of mercenaries had been employed by the nations bordering on Palestine as early as the time of David (2 Sam. x. 6; 1 Chr. xix. 6, 7). Hence the supposition of the Syrians was far from improbable.

the kings of the Hittites] The Hittites, who are found first in the south (Gen. xxiii. 7), then in the centre of Judæa (Josh. xi. 3), seem to have retired northwards after the occupation of Palestine by the Israelites. They are found among the Syrian enemies of the Egyptians in the monuments of the 19th dynasty (about B.C. 1300), and appear at

of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon
 7 us. Wherefore they ^{arose} and fled in the twilight, and left
 their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it
 8 was, and fled for their life. And when these lepers came to the
 uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat
 and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment,
 and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another
 9 tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid it. Then they
 said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good
 tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning
 light, ^{some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come,}
 10 that we may go and tell the king's household. So they came
 and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them,
 saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there*
was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and
 11 asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. And he called the porters;
 12 and they told it to the king's house within. ¶ And the king
 arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew
 you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be*
 hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide them-
 selves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we
 13 shall catch them alive, and get into the city. And one of his
 servants answered and said, *Let some take, I pray thee, five of*
the horses that remain, which are left ^{in the city, (behold, they}
are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I*
say, they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are
 14 consumed:) and let us send and see. They took therefore two

7 Ps. 49. 4,
 5, 6.
 Prov. 28. 1.

¹ Heb. *we shall find punishment.*

² Heb. *in it.*

that time to have inhabited the valley of the Upper Orontes. In the early Assyrian monuments they form a great confederacy, as the most powerful people of northern Syria, dwelling on both banks of the Euphrates, while at the same time there is a second confederacy of their race further to the south, which seems to inhabit the anti-Lebanon between Hamath and Damascus. These southern Hittites are in the time of Benhadad and Hazael a powerful people, especially strong in *chariots*; and generally assist the Syrians against the Assyrians. The Syrians seem now to have imagined that these southern Hittites had been hired by Jehoram.

the kings of the Egyptians] This is a remarkable expression, since Egypt elsewhere throughout Scripture appears always as a centralised monarchy under a single ruler. The probability is that the principal Pharaoh had a prince or princes associated with him on the throne, a practice not uncommon in Egypt. The period, which is that of the 22nd dynasty, is an obscure one, on which the monuments throw but little light.

9. The lepers began to think that if they kept this important matter secret during the whole night for their own private advantage, when the morning came they

would be found out, accused, and punished (see marg.).

10. *they called unto the porter...and told them*] The word "porter" is used like our "guard," and the meaning here is, not that the lepers called to any particular individual, but that they roused the body of men who were keeping guard at one of the gates.

12. *his servants*] i.e., "high officers of the household," not mere domestics.

I will shew you what the Syrians have done] Jehoram sees in the deserted camp a stratagem like that connected with the taking of Ai (Josh. viii. 3-19). The suspicion was a very natural one, since the Israelites knew of no reason why the Syrians should have raised the siege.

13. *behold, &c.*] The LXX. and a large number of the Hebrew MSS. omit the clause, "behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it." But the text followed by our translators, which is that of the best MSS., is intelligible and needs no alteration. It is merely a prolix way of stating that the horsemen will incur no greater danger by going to reconnoitre than the rest of their countrymen by remaining in the city, since the whole multitude is perishing.

14. *two chariot horses*] Translate, "two horse-chariots." They dispatched i.e. two

chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, 15 saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan. and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messenger: 16 returned, and told the king. ¶ And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour *was*:
^a ver. 1. sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, ^aac-
 17 cording to the word of the LORD. And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, ^cas the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to 18 him. And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, ^aTwo measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to-morrow about 19 this time in the gate of Samaria: and that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat 20 thereof. And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

^a ch. 1. 35. **CHAP. 8.** THEN spake Elisha unto the woman, "whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD ^bhath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land 2 seven years. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned 3 in the land of the Philistines seven years. And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king 4 for her house and for her land. And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray 5 thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had ^crestored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, *this is the woman, and this is her*

war-chariots, with their proper complement of horses and men, to see whether the retreat was a reality or only a feint. The "horses" sent would be four or six, since chariots were drawn by either two or three horses.

15. The Syrians had fled probably by the great road which led from Samaria to Damascus through Geba, En-gannim, Bethshean, and Aphek. It crosses the Jordan at the *Jiar Mejanina*, about thirty-five miles north-east of Samaria.

VIII. 1. The famine here recorded, and the conversation of the monarch with Gehazi, must have been anterior to the events related in ch. v.—since we may be sure that a king of Israel would not have entered into familiar conversation with a confirmed leper. The writer of Kings probably collected the miracles of Elisha from various sources, and did not always arrange them chronologically. Here the link of connexion is to be found in the nature of

the miracle. As Elisha on one occasion prophesied plenty, so on another he had prophesied *a* famine.

called for a famine] A frequent expression (cp. marg. reff.). God's "calling for" anything is the same as His producing it (see Ezek. xxxvi. 29; Rom. iv. 17).

2. The country of the Philistines—the rich low corn-growing plain along the sea-coast of Judah—was always a land of plenty compared with the highlands of Palestine. Moreover, if food failed there, it was easily imported by sea from the neighbouring Egypt.

3. During the Shunammite's absence in Philistia, her dwelling and her corn-fields had been appropriated by some one who refused to restore them. She therefore determined to appeal to the king. Such direct appeals are common in Oriental countries. Cp. vi. 26; 2 Sam. xiv. 4; 1 K. iii. 16.

6 son, whom Elisha restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain ¹officer, saying, Restore all that *was* her's, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until
7 now. ¶ And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of
8 God is come hither. And the king said unto ²Hazael, ³Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and ⁴enquire
9 of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present ⁵with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this
10 disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath showed me
11 that ⁶he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance ⁷stodfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God ⁸wept.
12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know ⁹the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of

* 1 Kin. 19. 15.

/ 1 Sam. 9. 7.

1 Kin. 14. 3.

ch. 5. 5.

9 ch. 1. 2.

* ver. 15.

* Luke 19. 11.

* ch. 10. 22.

* 12. 17.

* 13. 3. 7.

Amos 1. 3.

¹ Or, *eunuch*.² Heb. *in his hand*.³ Heb. *and set it*.

6. a certain officer] Lit., "a certain eunuch" (marg.). Eunuchs were now in common use at the Samaritan Court (cp. ix. 32). They are ascribed to the Court of David in Chronicles (1 Chr. xxviii. 1); and we may conjecture that they were maintained by Solomon. But otherwise we do not find them in the kingdom of Judah till the time of Hezekiah (Isai. lvi. 3, 4).

7. The hour had come for carrying out the command given by God to Elijah (marg. ref. c), and by him probably passed on to his successor. Elisha, careless of his own safety, quitted the land of Israel, and proceeded into the enemy's country, thus putting into the power of the Syrian king that life which he had lately sought so eagerly (vi. 13-19).

the man of God] The Damascenes had perhaps known Elisha by this title from the time of his curing Naaman. Or the phrase may be used as equivalent to "Prophet," which is the title commonly given to Elisha by the Syrians. See vi. 12. Cp. v. 13.

8. Hazael was no doubt a high officer of the court. The names of Hazael and Ben-hadad occur in the Assyrian inscription on the Black Obelisk now in the British Museum. Both are mentioned as kings of Damascus, who contended with a certain Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and suffered defeat at his hands. In one of the battles between this king and Benhadad, "Abub of Jezreel" is mentioned among the allies of the latter. This same Shalmaneser took tribute from Jehu. This is the point at which the Assyrian records first come in direct contact with those of the Jews.

9. every good thing of Damascus] Probably, besides rich robes and precious metals, the luscious wine of Helbon, which

was the drink of the Persian kings, the soft white wool of the anti-Libanus (Ezek. xxvii. 18), damask coverings of couches (Am. iii. 12), and numerous manufactured articles of luxury, which the Syrian capital imported from Tyre, Egypt, Nineveh, and Babylon. Forty camels were laden with it, and this goodly caravan paraded the streets of the town, conveying to the prophet the splendid gift designed for him. Eastern ostentation induces donors to make the greatest possible show of their gifts, and each camel would probably bear only one or two articles.

thy son Ben-hadad] A phrase indicative of the greatest respect, no doubt used at the command of Benhadad in order to dispose the Prophet favourably towards him. Cp. vi. 21.

10. Translate—"Go, say unto him, Thou shalt certainly live: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall certainly die." i.e. "Say to him, what thou hast already determined to say, what a courtier is sure to say (cp. 1 K. xxii. 15), but know that the fact will be otherwise."

11. That is, "And he (Elisha) settled his countenance, and set it (towards Hazael), till he (Hazael) was ashamed." Elisha fixed on Hazael a long and meaning look, till the latter's eyes fell before his, and his cheek flushed. Elisha, it would seem, had detected the guilty thought that was in Hazael's heart, and Hazael perceived that he had detected it. Hence the "shame."

12. the evil that thou wilt do] The intention is not to tax Hazael with special cruelty, but only to enumerate the ordinary horrors of war, as it was conducted among the Oriental nations of the time. Cp. marg. ref.

- Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what, ¹³ *is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* And Elisha answered, ¹⁴ *"The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."* So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me *that* thou shouldst surely recover.
- ¹⁵ And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died:
- ¹⁶ and Hazael reigned in his stead. ¶ And in the fifth year of Joram, the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, ¹⁷ *Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.* ¹⁸ *Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.* And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for ¹⁹ *the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.* Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, ²⁰ *as he promised him to give*
- ¹ ch. 15. 16.
Hos. 13. 16.
Amos 1. 13.
1 Sam. 17. 31.
1 Kin. 19. 15.
2 Chr. 21. 3, 4.
2 Chr. 21. 5, &c.
9 ver. 28.
2 Sam. 7. 13.
1 Kin. 11. 36.
15. 4.
2 Chr. 21. 7.

¹ Heb. *reigned*. Began to reign in consort with his father.

13. *But what, is thy servant a dog?*] This is a mistranslation, and conveys to the English reader a sense quite different from that of the original. Hazael's speech runs thus—*"But what is thy servant, this dog, that he should do this great thing?"* He does not shrink from Elisha's words, or mean to say that he would be a dog, could he act so cruelly as Elisha predicts he will. On the contrary, Elisha's prediction has raised his hopes, and his only doubt is whether so much good fortune ("this great thing") can be in store for one so mean. "Dog" here, as generally (though not always) in Scripture, has the sense of "mean," "low," "contemptible."

14. Hazael omitted the clause by which Elisha had shown how those words were to be understood. He thus deceived his master, while he could flatter himself that he had not uttered a lie.

15. *a thick cloth*] Probably, a cloth or mat placed between the head and the upper part of the bedstead, which in Egypt and Assyria was often so shaped that pillows (in our sense) were unnecessary.

The objection that Elisha is involved in the guilt of having suggested the deed, has no real force or value. Hazael was no more obliged to murder Benhadad because a Prophet announced to him that he would one day be king of Syria, than David was obliged to murder Saul because another Prophet anointed him king in Saul's room (1 Sam. xvi. 1-13).

16-19. The passage is parenthetic, resuming the history of the kingdom of Judah from 1 K. xxii. 50.

18. The opening words are—"In the fifth year of Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, and of Jehoshaphat, king of Ju-

dah;" but they contradict all the other chronological notices of Jehoshaphat (1 K. xxii. 42, 51; 2 K. iii. 1; 2 Chr. xx. 31), which give him a reign of at least twenty-three years. Hence some have supposed that the words "Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah," are accidentally repeated. Those, however, who regard them and i. 17 as sound, suppose that Jehoshaphat gave his son the royal title in his sixteenth year, while he advanced him to a real association in the empire seven years later, in his twenty-third year. Two years afterwards, Jehoshaphat died, and Jehoram became sole king.

17. The "eight years" are counted from his association in the kingdom. They terminate in the twelfth year of Jehoram of Israel.

18. Jehoshaphat's alliance, political and social, with Ahab and Ahab's family had not been allowed to affect the purity of his faith. Jehoram his son, influenced by his wife, Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, "walked in the way of the kings of Israel;" he allowed, *i.e.*, the introduction of the Baal-worship into Judæa.

Among the worst of Jehoram's evil doings must be reckoned the cruel murder of his six brothers (2 Chr. xxi. 4), whom he slew to obtain their wealth.

19. The natural consequence of Jehoram's apostasy would have been the destruction of his house, and the transfer of the throne of Judah to another family. Cp. the punishments of Jeroboam (1 K. xiv. 10), Baasha (do. xvi. 2-4), and Ahab (do. xxi. 20-22). But the promises to David (marg. *reff.*) prevented this removal of the dynasty; and so Jehoram was punished in other ways (v. 22; 2 Chr. xxi. 12-19).

20 him always a ¹light, and to his children. In his days ²Edom
 revolted from under the hand of Judah, ³and made a king over
 21 themselves. So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots
 with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which
 compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the
 22 people fled into their tents. ⁴Yet Edom revolted from under
 the hand of Judah unto this day. ⁵Then Libnah revolted at
 23 the same time. ¶ And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all
 that he did, ⁶are they not written in the book of the chronicles
 24 of the kings of Judah? And Joram slept with his fathers, and
 was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and ⁷Ahaziah
 25 his son reigned in his stead. ¶ In the twelfth year of Joram
 the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram
 26 king of Judah begin to reign. ⁸Two and twenty years old ⁹was
 Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in
 Jerusalem. And his mother's name ¹⁰was Athaliah, the daughter
 27 of Omri king of Israel. ¹¹And he walked in the way of the
 house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as ¹²did
 the house of Ahab: for he ¹³was the son in law of the house of
 28 Ahab. And he went ¹⁴with Joram the son of Ahab to the war
 against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians

* 2 Chr. 21.8,
 9, 10.
 † 1 Kin. 22.
 47.

* 2 Chr. 21.
 10.

* 2 Chr. 22.1.

† See 2 Chr.
 22. 2.

* 2 Chr. 22.
 3, 1.

* 2 Chr. 22.5.

¹ Heb. candle, or, lamp.

² And so fulfilled, Gen. 27.
 40.

* Called, *Azariah*, 2 Chr.
 22. 6, and *Jehoahaz*, 2
 Chr. 21. 17. & 25. 23.

⁴ Or, granddaughter: See
 vcr. 18.

20. Edom, which had been reduced by David (2 Sam. viii. 14; 1 K. xi. 15, 16), but had apparently revolted from Solomon (1 K. xi. 14), was again subjected to Judah in the reign of Jehoshaphat (iii. 8-26). The Edomites had, however, retained their native kings, and with them the spirit of independence. They now rose in revolt, and fulfilled the prophecy (Gen. xxvii. 40), remaining from henceforth a separate and independent people (Jer. xxv. 21, xxvii. 3; Am. i. 11, &c.). Kings of Edom, who seem to be independent monarchs, are often mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions.

21. *Zair* Perhaps Seir, the famous mountain of Edom (Gen. xiv. 6).

the people i.e. The Edomites. Yet, notwithstanding his success, Joram was forced to withdraw from the country, and to leave the natives to enjoy that independence (v. 22), which continued till the time of John Hyrcanus, who once more reduced them.

Libnah revolted Libnah being towards the south-west of Palestine (Josh. xv. 42), its revolt cannot well have had any direct connexion with that of Edom. It had been the capital of a small Canaanite state under a separate king before its conquest by Joshua (Josh. x. 30, xii. 15), and may perhaps always have retained a considerable Canaanitish population. Or its loss may have been connected with the attacks made by the Philistines on Jehoram's territories (2 Chr. xxi. 16, 17).

24. On the death of Jehoram, see 2 Chr. xxi. 12-19. His son is also called Jehoahaz

(margin) by a transposition of the two elements of the name.

26. Such names as Athaliah, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, indicate that the Baal-worshipping kings of Israel did not openly renounce the service of Jehovah. Athaliah is "the time for Jehovah;" Ahaziah "the possession of Jehovah;" Jehoram, or Joram, "exalted by Jehovah."

the daughter of Omri "Son" and "daughter" were used by the Jews of any descendants (cp. Matt. i. 1). The whole race were "the children of Israel." Athaliah was the *grand-daughter* of Omri (see marg.). Her being called "the daughter of Omri" implies that an idea of special greatness was regarded as attaching to him, so that his name prevailed over that of Ahab. Indications of this ideal greatness are found in the Assyrian inscriptions, where the early name for Samaria is Beth-Omri, and where even Jehu has the title of "the son of Omri."

28. This war of the two kings against Hazael seems to have had for its object the recovery of Ramoth-gilead, which Ahab and Jehoshaphat had vainly attempted fourteen years earlier (1 K. xxii. 3-36). Joram probably thought that the accession of a new and usurping monarch presented a favourable opportunity for a renewal of the war. It may also have happened that Hazael was engaged at the time upon his northern frontier with repelling one of those Assyrian attacks which seem by the inscriptions to have fallen upon him in quick succession during his earlier years. At any

- ^b ch. 9. 15. 29 wounded Joram. And ^bking Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds ¹which the Syrians had given him at ²Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. ^cAnd Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was ³sick.
- CHAP. 9. AND Elisha the prophet called one of "the children of the prophets, and said unto him, ^bGird up thy loins, and take 2 this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead: and when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among ^dhis brethren, and carry him to an ^einner chamber; 3 then ^ctake the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. 4 Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. 5 ¶And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O 6 captain. And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, ^fThus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the 7 LORD, *even* over Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avengo the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, ^gat 8 the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and ^hI will cut off from Ahab ⁱhim that pisseth against the 9 wall, and ^jhim that is shut up and left in Israel: and I will make the house of Ahab like the house of ^kJeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of ^lBaasha the son of Ahijah: 10 ^mand the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and ⁿthere shall be none to bury *her*. And he opened the door, and 11 fled. ¶Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, *Is all well?* wherefore came ^othis mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his 12 communication. And they said, *It is false*; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the 13 LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then they hastened, and ^ptook every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the
- ¹ 1 Kin. 19. 16.
² Chr. 22. 7.
- ³ 1 Kin. 19. 4.
& 21. 15.
- ⁴ 1 Kin. 11. 10.
& 21. 21.
- ⁵ 1 Sam. 25. 22.
- ⁶ Deut. 32. 30.
- ⁷ 1 Kin. 11. 10.
- ⁸ 15. 29.
& 21. 22.
- ⁹ 1 Kin. 16. 3, 11.
- ¹⁰ 1 Kin. 21. 23.
- ¹¹ ver. 35. 36.
- ¹² Jer. 29. 20.
- ¹³ John 10. 20.
- ¹⁴ Acts 26. 24.
- ¹⁵ 1 Cor. 4. 10.
- ¹⁶ Matt. 21. 7.
- ¹⁷ Heb. *wherein* the Syrians had wounded.
- ¹⁸ Called, *Ramoth*, ver. 28.
- ¹⁹ Heb. wounded.
- ²⁰ Heb. chamber in a chamber.

rate, the war appears to have been successful. Ramoth-gilead was recovered (ix. 14), and remained probably thenceforth in the hands of the Israelites.

the Syrians wounded Joram] According to Josephus, Joram was struck by an arrow in the course of the siege, but remained till the place was taken. He then withdrew to Jezreel (1 K. xviii. 45, xxi. 1), leaving his army under Jehu within the walls of the town.

IX. 1. *box*] Rather, "flask," or "vial" (1 Sam. x. 1). Oil and ointment were commonly kept in open-mouthed jars, vases, or bottles made of glass, alabaster, or earthenware. Many such vessels have been found both in Egypt and Assyria. The "oil" was the holy oil, compounded after the receipt given in Exodus (xxx. 23-25).

3. *flee, and tarry not*] The probable object of these directions was at once to prevent questioning, and to render the whole thing more striking.

5. The chief officers—the generals—were assembled together in Jehu's quarters, perhaps holding a council of war. The place of assembly seems to have been the great court. Hence, Jehu "went into the house" (v. 6)—entered, that is, one of the rooms opening into the court.

11. *this mad fellow*] The captains, seeing his excited look, his strange action, and his extreme haste, call him (as soldiers would) "this wild fellow."

13. *took every man his garment, and put it under him*] The outer cloak of the Jews was a sort of large shawl or blanket, which might well serve for a carpet of state. Such

- top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu 'is king.
- 14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and
 15 all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. But 'king 'Joram
 was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the
 Syrians 'had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of
 Syria.) ¶ And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then 'let none go
 16 forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel. So
 Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there.
- 17 And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. And
 there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied
 the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company.
 And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them,
 18 and let him say, *Is it peace?* So there went one on horseback
 to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And
 Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind
 me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to
 19 them, but he cometh not again. Then he sent out a second on
 horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king,
Is it peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with
 20 peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying,
 He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the
 'driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he
 21 driveth 'furiously. And Joram said, 'Make ready. And his
 chariot was made ready. And 'Joram king of Israel and Aha-
 ziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went
 out against Jehu, and 'met him in the portion of Naboth the
 22 Jezreelite. ¶ And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that
 he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he answered, What peace, so
 long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witch-

¶ ch. 8. 29.

¶ ch. 8. 23.

* 2 Chr. 22. 7.

¹ Heb. *reigneth*.² Heb. *Jehoram*.³ Heb. *smote*.⁴ Heb. *let no escaper go*.⁵ *do*.⁶ Or, *marching*.⁷ Heb. *in madness*.⁸ Heb. *Bind*.⁹ Heb. *found*.

a carpet is commonly represented on the seat of an Assyrian throne in the Nineveh sculptures.

The stairs rose against the wall of the house from the pavement of the court to the level of the upper story, or of the roof. At the top of the stairs would be a flat platform, and this would form a throne, on which the new king could exhibit himself to his subjects.

blew with trumpets] On this recognised part of the ceremony of a coronation, see xi. 14; 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 K. i. 39.

14. *had kept*] Rather, "was keeping watch." The city had been taken; but the war continuing, and there being a danger of the Syrians recovering it, Joram and all Israel (*i.e.* the whole military force) were guarding the recent conquest, while Hazael threatened it.

18. *What hast thou to do with peace?*] *i.e.*, "What does it matter to thee whether my errand is one of peace or not?"

20. *the driving... furiously*] The word translated "driving" means "leading" or "conducting" a band. The watchman observed that the "company" (or, multitude)

was led forward madly, and associated this strange procedure with the known character of Jehu. It is curious that some Versions, as well as Josephus, give an opposite sense:—"he driveth quietly."

Jehu was properly "the grandson" of Nimshi, who was probably a more famous person than Jehoshaphat (r. 2).

21. *Make ready*] Lit. (as in marg.) "Bind," *i.e.* "Harness the horses to the chariot." The king had no suspicion of Jehu's treason. Probably he imagined that he was bringing him important news from the seat of war. Ahaziah's accompanying him is significant of the close friendship which united the uncle and the nephew. They went out not "against" Jehu, but rather "to meet him."

in the portion of Naboth] This is no longer called a "vineyard" (1 K. xxi. 1-18); probably because it had been thrown into the palace garden, and applied to the purpose for which Ahab originally wanted it. The approach to the city on this side must have lain either through it, or close by it.

22. Joram had asked the usual question, "Is it peace?"—meaning simply, "Is all

- 23 crafts are so many? And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and
 24 said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery, O Ahaziah.* And Jehu drew
 a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his
 arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down
 25 in his chariot. Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up,
 and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite;
 for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after
 1 Kin. 21. 20. 26 Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; surely
 I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of
 1 Kin. 21. 13. his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat,
 saith the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat
 27 of ground, according to the word of the LORD. ¶ But when
 Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the
 garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite
 him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to
 Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died
 28 there. And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem,
 and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of
 29 David. And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab
 30 began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. ¶ And when Jehu was
 come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face,
 1 Kin. 21. 20. 26 Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; surely
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 29 David. And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab
 30 began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. ¶ And when Jehu was
 come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face,

¹ Heb. filled his hand with a bow.

² Heb. bowed.
³ Heb. bloods.
⁴ Or, portion.

⁵ Heb. put her eyes in painting.

well?" In Jehu's reply, by "whoredoms" we are probably to understand "idolatries," acts of spiritual unfaithfulness; by "witchcrafts," dealings with the Baal prophets and oracles. Cp. i. 2 note.

23. turned his hands] The meaning is that Joram ordered his charioteer to turn round and drive back to the town.

24. Jehu drew a bow, &c.] Lit. as in margin, i.e. "Jehu took a bow in his hand." The arrow struck Jehoram's back, between his two shoulders, as he fled.

25. rode together after Ahab] The Assyrian sculptures make it probable that Josephus was right in interpreting this "rode side by side behind Ahab in his chariot." The Assyrian monarchs, when they go out to war, are frequently attended by two guards, who stand behind them in the same chariot.

burden] Cp. the use of the same word in Isaiah (xiii. 1, xv. 1, &c.), and in Lamentations (ii. 14), for a denunciation of woe.

26. The passage from "Surely I have seen" to "Saith the Lord," is exegetical of r. 25, containing the "burden" there spoken of.

and the blood of his sons] The murder of Naboth's sons is here for the first time mentioned; but as the removal of the sons was necessary, if the vineyard was to pass to Ahab, we can well understand that Jezebel would take care to clear them out of the way.

27. by the way of the garden-house] Or, "by the way of Beth-Gan," which has been conjectured to be another name for En-

Gannim, "the spring of the gardens." Both are considered identical with Ginnza, the modern Jenin, which lies due south of Jezreel. The road from Jezreel (Zerin) to Esdraelon, but after a while begins to rise over the Samaritan hills. Here probably was "the ascent of Gur, by Ibleam," which may have occupied the site of the modern Jelama. Whether the soldiers attacked him there or not is uncertain. The words, "And they did so," are not in the original.

Megiddo] On its situation, see Josh. xii. 21 note; and on the possible reconciliation of this passage with 2 Chr. xxii. 9, see the note there.

29. in the eleventh year] The twelfth according to viii. 25. The discrepancy may be best explained from two ways of reckoning the accession of Ahaziah, who is likely to have been regent for his father during at least one year. See 2 Chr. xxi. 19.

30. painted her face] Lit. "put her eyes in antimony"—i.e. dyed the upper and under eyelids, a common practice in the East, even at the present day. The effect is at once to increase the apparent size of the eye, and to give it unnatural brilliancy. Representations of eyes thus embellished occur on the Assyrian sculptures, and the practice existed among the Jews (marg. ref.; and Jer. iv. 30).

tired her head] Dressed (attired) her head, and no doubt put on her royal robes, that she might die as became a queen, in true royal array.

31 and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, ^a*Hail* Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two 32 or three ^beunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the 33 wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for ^c*she is a king's* 34 daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands. 35 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake ^dby his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ^eIn the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat 36 the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase of Jezebel shall be ^fas dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

^a 1 Kin. 16.
9—20.

^c 1 Kin. 10.
31.

^d 1 Kin. 21.
23.
^e Ps. 83. 10.

CHAP. 10. AND Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to ¹them that brought up Ahab's children, 2 saying, Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and 3 horses, a fenced city also, and armour; look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's 4 throne, and fight for your master's house. But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before 5 him: how then shall we stand? And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of *the children*, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou *that which is good* in thine eyes. 6 ¶ Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be ²mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the

¹ Or, chamberlains.

² Heb. by the hand of.
³ Heb. nourishers.

⁴ Heb. for me.

a window] Rather, "the window." The gate-tower had probably, as many of those in the Assyrian sculptures, one window only.

34. Leaving the mangled body on the bare earth, Jehu went to the banquet. It was, no doubt, important that he should at once show himself to the Court as king. In calling Jezebel "this cursed one," Jehu means to remind his hearers that the curse of God had been pronounced upon her by Elijah (rv. 30), and so to justify his own conduct.

a king's daughter] Merely as the widow of Ahab and mother of Jehoram, Jehu would not have considered Jezebel entitled to burial. But she was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians (marg. ref.), and so a princess born. This would entitle her to greater respect. Wilfully to have denied her burial would have been regarded as an unpardonable insult by the reigning Sidonian monarch.

X. 1. seventy sons] i.e. descendants; there

were included among them children of Jehoram (rv. 2, 3, &c.).

2. a fenced city] Or, "fenced cities." If Samaria had refused to acknowledge Jehu, many other Israelite towns would have been sure to follow the example.

3. Jehu, placing his adversaries' advantages before them in the most favourable light, called upon them to decide what they would do. The unscrupulous soldier shows shrewdness as well as courage, a sharp wit as well as a bold heart.

4. two kings] Lit. "the two kings," i.e. Jehoram and Ahaziah (ix. 21—28).

5. The officer who had the charge of the palace (1 K. iv. 6 note) and the governor of the town (1 K. xxii. 26 note) seem to correspond to the "rulers" of r. 1.

6. The heads of rivals, pretenders, and other obnoxious persons are commonly struck off in the East, and conveyed to the chief ruler, in order that he may be positively certified that his enemies have ceased to live. In the Assyrian sculptures we

- heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time. Now the king's sons, *being* seventy persons, *were* with the great men of the city, which brought them up. And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and "slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel. And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning. And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye *be* righteous: behold, ¹I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?
- ^a 1 Kin. 21. 21. 8 Know now that there shall "fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake ⁴by his servant Elijah. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his ²kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining. ¶ And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. And as he was at the "shearing house in the way, "Jehu "met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down ⁶to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.
- ^b ch. 9. 14, 24. 13 And he said, Take them-alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left he any of them. ¶ And when he was departed thence, he "lighted on "Jehonadab the son of "Rechab coming to meet him: and he "saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jeho-
- ^c 1 Sam. 3. 10. 10
- ^d 1 Kin. 21. 10, 21, 20. 11
- ^e ch. 8. 29. 2 Chr. 22. 8. 13
- ^f Jer. 35. 0, &c. 1 Chr. 2. 55. 15

¹ Heb. by the hand of.² Or, acquaintance.³ Heb. house of shepherds

binding sheep.

⁴ Heb. found.⁵ Heb. to the peace of, &c.⁶ Heb. found.⁷ Heb. blessed.

constantly see soldiers conveying heads from place to place, not, however, in baskets, but in their hands, holding the head by the hair.

8. *two heaps*] Probably placed one on either side of the gateway, to strike terror into the partisans of the late dynasty as they passed in and out of the town.

9. *Ye be righteous*] i.e. "Ye are just, and can judge aright." Jehu unfairly keeps back the fact that he had commanded the execution.

10. *shall fall to the earth*] i.e. "Shall remain unfulfilled" (cp. marg. ref.). Jehu and others were but executing the word of the Lord.

11. *So Jehu slew*] Rather, "And Jehu slew." The reference is to fresh executions (cp. v. 17). He proceeded on his bloody course, not merely destroying the remainder of the kindred of Ahab, but further putting to death all the most powerful of Ahab's partisans.

his priests] Not the Baal priests generally, whose persecution came afterwards (v. 19), but only such of them as were attached to the Court.

12. *the shearing-house*] Lit. as in marg.

Perhaps already a proper name, Beth-eked, identical with the Beth-akad of Jerome, which is described as between Jezreel and Samaria; but not yet identified.

13. *the brethren of Ahaziah*] Not the actual brothers of Ahaziah, who had all been slain by the Arabs before his accession to the throne (2 Chr. xxi. 17, xxii. 1); but his nephews, the sons of his brothers (marg. ref.). It is remarkable that they should have penetrated so far into the kingdom of Israel without having heard of the revolution.

the children of the king, &c.] i.e. "the sons of Jehoram, and the children (sons and grandsons) of the queen-mother, Jezebel." Some of both may well have been at Jezreel, though the younger branches of the royal family were at Samaria (v. 1).

15. Jehonadab (cp. margin) belonged to the tribe of the Kenites, one of the most ancient in Palestine (Gen. xv. 19). Their origin is unknown, but their habits were certainly those of Arabs. Owing to their connexion with Moses (Num. xxiv. 21 note), they formed a friendship with the Israelites, accompanied them in their wanderings, and finally received a location in the wilderness of Judah (Judg. i. 16). The character of this chief.

- nadab answered, It is. If it be, ^agive me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. ^a Ezr. 10. 19.
- 16 And he said, Come with me, and see my ¹zeal for the LORD. So ¹ 1Kin. 10. 10.
- 17 they made him ride in his chariot. And when he came to Samaria, ^ahe slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, ^a ch. 9. 8.
- 18 ¹which he spake to Elijah. ¶ And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, ²Ahab served Baal a little; but ² Chr. 22. 8.
- 19 Jehu shall serve him much. Now therefore call unto me all the ¹ 1Kin. 21. 21.
- "prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none ¹ 1Kin. 10. 31, 32.
- be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did ¹ it in subtilty, ¹ 1Kin. 22. 6.
- to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.
- 20 And Jehu said, ¹Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And
- 21 they proclaimed ¹ it. And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the ¹house of Baal; and ¹ 1Kin. 16. 32.
- 22 the house of Baal was ²full from one end to another. And he said unto him that ²was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments

¹ Heb. Sanctify.² Or, so full, that they stood mouth to mouth.

Jonadab, is best seen in the rule which he established for his descendants (Jer. xxxv. 6, 7)—a rule said to be still observed at the present day. It would seem that he sympathised strongly with Jehu's proceedings, and desired to give the countenance of his authority, such as it was, to the new reign. According to the Hebrew text, Jehu "saluted" (or blessed) Jehonadab. According to the LXX. and Josephus, Jehonadab "saluted" (or blessed) the king. Further, the Hebrew text runs—"And Jehonadab answered, It is, it is. Give (me) thy hand. And he gave (him) his hand, and took him up to him into the chariot." Our translators appear to have preferred the LXX.; but the Hebrew is more graphic. Jehu was no doubt glad to have the countenance of Jehonadab on his public entrance into Samaria. The ascetic had a reputation for sanctity, which could not fail to make his companionship an advantage to the but half-established monarch.

17. Cp. v. 11. Thus was finally completed the political revolution which transferred the throne from the house of Omri to that of Nimshi, the fifth of the royal families of Israel.

according to the saying of the LORD] This emphatic reiteration (cp. v. 10) marks, first, how in the mind of the writer all this history is viewed as deriving its special interest from its being so full and complete an accomplishment of Elijah's prophecies; and, secondly, how at the time Jehu carefully put forward the plea that what he did had this object. It does not indicate that a single-minded wish to execute God's will was Jehu's predominate motive. Probably, even where he most strictly fulfilled the letter of prophecies, he was working for

himself, not for God; and hence vengeance was denounced upon his house even for the very "blood of Jezreel" (Hos. i. 4).

18. Though we cannot ascribe to Jehu a spirit of true piety (see v. 29), we can well enough understand how the soldier, trained in the Syrian wars, revolted against the unmanly and voluptuous worship of the Dea Syria, and wished to go back to the simple solemn service of Jehovah. These views and feelings it would have been dangerous to declare during the lifetime of Jezebel. Even after her death it was prudent to temporise, to wait until the party of Ahab was crushed politically, before broaching the religious question. Having now slain all the issue of Ahab in the kingdom of Israel, and all the influential men of the party (vv. 7, 11, and 17), Jehu felt that he might begin his reformation of religion. But even now he uses "subtilty" rather than open violence. "Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much."

19. It appears from this verse that the "prophets" and "priests" of Baal were not identical. The former would correspond to the dervishes, the latter to the mollahs, of Mahometan countries. By the "servants" of Baal are meant the ordinary worshippers.

20. a solemn assembly] Jehu applies to his proposed gathering the sacred name assigned in the Law to the chiefest Festivals of Jehovah (see Lev. xxiii. 36; Num. xxix. 35; Deut. xvi. 8).

21. In order to understand how such numbers could find room, we must remember that the ancient temples had vast courts around them, which could contain many thousands.

22. the vestry] The sacred robes of the

- for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth
 23 vestments. And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab,
 into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal,
 Search, and look that there be here with you none of the ser-
 24 vants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. And
 when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu
 appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If any of the men*
whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him
 * 1 Kin. 20. 25 *go, his life shall be for the life of him.* And it came to pass, as
 39. soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that
 Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them;
 let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of
 the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and
 26 went to the city of the house of Baal. And they brought forth
 * 1 Kin. 14. 27 the ²images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. And
 23. they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house
 * Ezra 6. 11. 28 of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. ¶ Thus
 Dan. 2. 6. 29 Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit from the sins of
 & 3. 29. Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu de-
 parted not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that were
 * 1 Kin. 12. 30 in Beth-el, and that were in Dan. ¶ And the LORD said unto
 28, 29. Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is
 right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab ac-
 cording to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth
- † See ver. 35,
 ch. 13. 1, 10,
 & 14. 23.
 & 15. 8, 12.
- ¹ Heb. the mouth.
- ² Heb. statues.

Baal priests seem to have been of linen, and were probably white. The vestry here mentioned may, probably, be the robe-chamber of the royal palace, from which the king gave a festal garment to each worshipper.

23. The presence of persons belonging to another religion was usually regarded by the ancients as a profanation of the rites. In the case of the Greek mysteries such intrusion is said to have been punished by death. Consequently Jehu could give these injunctions without arousing any suspicion. 25. as soon as he had made an end of offering] The actual sacrificers were no doubt the priests of Baal; but Jehu is considered to have made the offering, since he furnished the victims. Cp. 1 K. viii. 62, 63.

the guard] Lit. "the runners." This name seems to have been given to the royal body-guard as early as the time of Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 17, marg.). It was their duty to run by the side of the king's chariot as he moved from place to place.

cast them out, and went] Rather, "the captains hastened and went," or "went hastily;" which gives a satisfactory sense. That the soldiers should have troubled themselves to cast the bodies of the slain out of the temple enclosure is very unlikely.

the city of the house of Baal] i.e. the temple itself, as distinguished from the court in which it stood, is intended. The guard having slain all who were in the court, rushed on and entered the sanctuary, there no doubt completing the massacre, and further tearing down and bringing out the

sacred objects mentioned in the next verse.

26. the images] Or "pillars" of wood. The Phœnician pillar idols were mere columns, obelisks, or posts, destitute of any shaping into the semblance of humanity (cp. 1 K. xiv. 23 note).

27. And they brake down the image of Baal] The other images, it appears, were not images of Baal, but of inferior deities. The image of Baal, which was "broken down," and not burnt, would seem to have been of stone, perhaps erected in front of the temple.

29. To abolish the calf-worship was a thought which had probably never occurred to Jehu. He had religious feeling enough, and patriotism enough, to detest the utterly debasing Astarte worship; but the pure worship of Jehovah was altogether beyond and above him.

30. And the LORD said unto Jehu] Probably by the mouth of Elisha. To a certain extent Jehu's measures were acts of obedience, for which God might see fit to assign him a temporal reward.

thy children, &c.] This was accomplished in the persons of Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, the son, grandson, great-grandson, and great-great-grandson of Jehu (cp. marg. ref.). No other family sat upon the throne of Israel so long. The house of Omri, which furnished four kings, held the crown for three generations only and for less than fifty years—that of Jehu reigned for five generations and for above a hundred years.

31 generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. But Jehu ¹took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from ²the sins of Jeroboam, which ³made Israel to sin. ¶ In those days the LORD began ⁴to cut Israel short: and ⁵Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; 33 from Jordan ⁶eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Arer, which ⁷is by 34 the river Arnon, ⁸even ⁹Gilead and Bashan. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, ¹⁰are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 35 And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. And ¹¹the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria ¹²was twenty and eight years.

CHAP. 11. AND when ¹³Athaliah ¹⁴the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the ¹⁵seed royal. 2 But ¹⁶Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took ¹⁷Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons ¹⁸which were slain; and they hid him, ¹⁹even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not

¹ Heb. observed not.

² Heb. to cut off the ens.

³ Heb. toward the rising of the sun.

⁴ Or, even to Gilead and Bashan.

⁵ Heb. the days were.

⁶ Heb. seed of the kingdom.

⁷ 2 Chr. 22. 11, Jehosheba.

⁸ Or, Jehoash.

32. to cut Israel short] Lit. "to cut off in Israel," i.e. to take away from Israel portions of its territory (see marg. ref.).

33. The loss of the entire trans-Jordanic territory seems to be intended, or at any rate its complete ruin and devastation (cp. marg. ref. y). This was the home of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and of the half tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xxii. 1-9). It was more accessible from Damascus than the region west of the river.

Arer] There were several places of this name. The one here mentioned is the most famous (cp. Deut. ii. 36 note).

even Gilead and Bashan] The writer had previously called the whole territory "Gilead;" now he distinguishes it, more accurately, into Gilead, the southern, and Bashan, the northern region (1 K. iv. 13, 19).

34. all his might] It is remarkable that this expression, which is not used by the author of Kings in connexion with any other king of Israel, should be applied to Jehu, whose ill success in his struggle with Hazael has just been noted, and who submitted to the Assyrians and consented to become a tributary. Perhaps the word is used here in the sense of "personal courage" rather than of "power."

36. in Samaria] The family of Ahab had made Jezreel a sort of second capital, and had reigned there, at least in part (ix. 15-30). Jehu and his descendants seem to have fixed their residence wholly in Samaria (xiii. 1, 10, xiv. 23, xv. 8).

XI. 1. Athaliah, as wife of Joram and

mother of Ahaziah, had guided both the internal and the external policy of the Jewish kingdom; she had procured the establishment of the worship of Baal in Judæa (viii. 18, 27), and had maintained a close alliance with the sister kingdom (do. v. 29, x. 13). The revolution effected by Jehu touched her nearly. It struck away from her the support of her relatives; it isolated her religious system, severing the communication with Phœnicia; and the death of Ahaziah deprived her of her legal status in Judæa, which was that of queen-mother (1 K. xv. 13 note), and transferred that position to the chief wife of her deceased son. Athaliah, instead of yielding to the storm, or merely standing on the defensive, resolved to become the assailant, and strike before any plans could be formed against her. In the absence of her son, hers was probably the chief authority at Jerusalem. She used it to command the immediate destruction of all the family of David, already thinned by previous massacres (x. 14; 2 Chr. xxi. 4, 17), and then seized the throne.

2. Jehosheba...sister of Ahaziah] "Half-sister," according to Josephus—daughter of Joram, not by Athaliah, but by another wife. She was married to Jehoiada the High-Priest, and was thus in a position to save and conceal her nephew, Joash, who was only one year old (cp. rr. 3, 21).

in the bedchamber] Lit. "in the chamber of mattresses"—probably a store-room in the palace in which mattresses were kept.

* 1 Kin. 14. 16.

* ch. 8. 12.

* Amos 1.3.

* 2 Chr. 22.

10.

* ch. 8. 26.

- 3 slain. And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six
 4 years. And Athaliah did reign over the land. ¶ And ^cthe
 seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds,
 with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into
 the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and
 took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them
 5 the king's son. And he commanded them, saying, *This is the*
 thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in ^don
 the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's
 6 house; and a third part *shall be* at the gate of Sur; and a third
 part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch
 7 of the house, ¹that it be not broken down. And two ²³parts of
 all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the
 8 watch of the house of the LORD about the king. And ye shall
 compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in
 his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be
 slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh
 9 in. ¶ And the captains over the hundreds did according to all
 things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every
 man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them
 that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the
 10 priest. And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give
 king David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the
 11 LORD. And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in
 his hand, round about the king, from the right ⁴corner of the

¹ Or, from breaking up.
² Or, companies.

³ Heb. hands.
⁴ Heb. shoulder.

3. and Athaliah did reign over the land] In these words the writer dismisses the entire reign of Athaliah, whereof he scorns to speak. We gather incidentally from xii. 5-12, compared with 2 Chr. xxiv. 7, that Athaliah used her power to establish the exclusive worship of Baal through the kingdom of Judah, and to crush that of Jehovah. She stopped the Temple service, gave over the sacred vessels of the Sanctuary to the use of the Baal priests, and employed the Temple itself as a quarry from which materials might be taken for the construction of a great temple to Baal, which rose in the immediate neighbourhood.

4. See marg. ref.

the captains] The word used here and in r. 19, *hak-kari*, designates a certain part of the royal guard, probably that which in the earlier times was known under the name of Cherethites (1 K. i. 38). Others see in the term an ethnic name—"Carians," who seem certainly to have been much inclined to take service as mercenaries from an early date. Render the whole passage thus—"And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the centurions of the Carians and the guardsmen (lit. 'runners,' x. 25), &c."

5-8. Five divisions of the guard under their five captains are distinguished here. Three of the five divisions "enter in" on the Sabbath; the other two "go forth" on the Sabbath (r. 7). By the former phrase

seems to be meant the mounting guard at the royal palace (the "king's house," where Athaliah then was); by the latter the serving of escort to the sovereign beyond the palace bounds. Jehoiada orders that of those whose business it would be to guard the palace on the ensuing Sabbath, one company or cohort should perform that task in the ordinary way, while another should watch the gate of Sur,—or better, "the gate of the foundation" (2 Chr. xxiii. 5)—that by which the palace was usually quitted for the Temple, and a third should watch another of the palace gates, called "the gate of the guard" (see r. 19). The two companies whose proper business it would be to serve as the royal escort beyond the palace walls, he orders to enter the Temple, and surround the person of the young king.

6. that it be not broken down] The one word in the original text of which this is a translation occurs nowhere else; and its meaning is very doubtful.

8. within the ranges] Rather, "within the ranks." If any one tried to break through the soldiers' ranks to the king, or even to disturb their order, he was to be immediately slain.

11. From the right corner, &c.] Rather, "from the right side of the Temple buildings to the left side"—i.e. right across the Temple court from the one side to the other, by the Altar of Burnt offerings, &c.

- temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and
 12 the temple. And he brought forth the king's son, and put the
 crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made
 him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and
 13 said, ¹God save the king. ¶²And when Athaliah heard the ¹1 Sam. 10.
 noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to the people ^{24.}
 14 into the temple of the LORD. And when she looked, behold, the ²2 Chr. 23.
 king stood by ^aa pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes and ^{12, &c.}
 the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land re- ^{A ch. 23. 3.}
 15 joiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, ^{2 Chr. 34.21.}
 and cried, Treason, Treason. But Jehoiada the priest com-
 manded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host,
 and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and
 him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had
 16 said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. And they
 laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the
 horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.
 17 ¶¹And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the ²2 Chr.23.10.
 king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people;
 18 ^abetween the king also and the people. And all the people of ²2 Sam. 5.3.
 the land went into the ¹house of Baal, and brake it down; his ¹ch. 10. 26.
 altars and his images ^mbrake they in pieces thoroughly, and ^mDeut.12.3.
 slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And ²2 Chr. 23. 17.
 19 the priest appointed ²officers over the house of the LORD. And he ²2 Chr. 23.
 took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, ^{18, &c.}
 and all the people of the land; and they brought down the
 king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the

¹ Heb. *Let the king live.*² Heb. *offices.*

This Altar stood exactly in front of the Temple-porch. Here the king was stationed; and before him and behind him, ("round about" him) stood the soldiers, drawn up several ranks deep across the entire court, just in front of the sacred building.

12. *the testimony*] i.e. "The Book of the Law" which was kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Deut. xxxi. 26). This Jehoiada placed on the king's head at the moment of coronation, perhaps to indicate that the king was not to be above, but under, the direction of the Law of his country.

14. *by a pillar*] Rather, "upon the pillar," probably a sort of stand, or pulpit, raised on a pillar. Under the later monarchy the Jewish king seems to have had a special place assigned him in the Temple-court, from which on occasions he addressed the people (marg. reff.).

15. *Have her forth without the ranges*] Rather, "Conduct her out between your ranks." Guard her, i.e. on all sides, that the people may not fall upon her and kill her as she passes through the court, thereby polluting the Temple.

16. *And they laid hands on her*] Most modern critics render—"and they gave her space," i.e. they cleared a way for her, and allowed her to walk out of the Temple not only unharmed but untouched.

17. *a covenant*] Rather, "the covenant," which either was already an established part of a coronation (marg. ref. k), or at least became such afterwards.

18. A temple had been built to Baal at Jerusalem itself by Athaliah, Ahaziah, or Jehoram. According to Josephus, it was constructed in the reign of Jehoram. Its exact position is uncertain.

images] The word used here is not the same as in x. 26, but a word which implies likeness. The Phœnicians had fashioned images, besides their unfashioned pillar-idols.

the priest appointed, &c.] The Temple worship having been discontinued during Athaliah's rule, it devolved on Jehoiada now to re-establish it (see marg. ref.). He had already summoned the Levites out of all the cities of Judah (2 Chr. xxiii. 2), and had made use of them in the events of the day. He therefore proceeded at once to assign the custody of the Temple to a particular course, before conducting the young king to the palace.

19. They conducted the king down from the Temple hill, across the valley of the Tyropœum, and up the opposite hill to the royal palace, entering it not by the "horse-gate" (r. 16), where Athaliah had just been slain, but by the "gate of the guard" (r. 6), which was probably the main gate of the

- gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne
 20 of the kings. And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the
 city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside*
 * 2 Chr. 24. 1. 21 the king's house. ¶ ^aSeven years old *was* Jehoash when he
 * 2 Chr. 24. 1. 12 began to reign. IN the seventh year of Jehu ^aJehoash began
 to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his
 2 mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba. And Jehoash did
^b 1 Kin. 15. 14. 3 Jehoiada the priest instructed him. But ^bthe high places were
 & 22. 43. not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in
 ch. 14. 4. 4 the high places. ¶ And Jehoash said to the priests, "All the
 * ch. 22. 4. money of the ¹²dedicated things that is brought into the house
 of the LORD; *even* ^dthe money of every one that passeth *the*
 * Ex. 30. 13. account, ^ethe money that every man is set at, and all the money
 * Ex. 35. 5. that ^ecometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of
 1 Chr. 29. 9. 5 the LORD, let the priests take it to them, every man of his ac-
 quaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house,
 6 wheresoever any breach shall be found. ¶ But it was so, that
^f 2 Chr. 24. 5. ^fin the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash ^fthe priests
 * 2 Chr. 24. 6. 7 had not repaired the breaches of the house. ^gThen king Jehoash
 called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said
 unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now
 therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but de-
 8 liver it for the breaches of the house. And the priests consented
 to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the

¹ Or, *holy things*.² Heb. *holinesses*.³ Heb. *the money of the**souls of his estimation,*

Lev. 27. 2.

⁴ Heb. *ascendeth upon the**heart of a man.*⁵ Heb. *in the twentieth year and third year.*

palace on the eastern side (see 2 Chr. xxiii. 20).

20. *they slew Athaliah with the sword*] This is one of the many little repetitions which mark the manner of the writer, and which generally contain some *little* point which has not been mentioned before (cp. v. 16).

XII. 2. *all his days, &c.*] i.e. "so long as Jehoiada was his adviser" (cp. 2 Chr. xxiv. 15-22). Jehoiada was, practically speaking, regent during the minority of Jehoash, i.e. 10 or 12 years. An increase of power to the priestly order was the natural consequence. Jehoiada bore the title of "High-Priest" (v. 10), which had been dropped since the time of Eleazar (Josh. xx. 6), and the Levitical order from this time became more mixed up with public affairs and possessed greater influence than previously. Jehoiada's successors traced their office to him rather than to Aaron (Jer. xxix. 26).

3. The worship on the "high places" seems to have continued uninterruptedly to the time of Hezekiah, who abolished it (xviii. 4). It was, however, again established by Manasseh, his son (xxi. 3). The priests at this time cannot have regarded it as idolatrous, or Jehoiada would have put it down during his regency.

4. It is remarkable that the first movement towards restoring the fabric of the

Temple should have come, not from Jehoiada, but from Jehoash (cp. 2 Chr. xxiv. 4). Jehoiada had, it seems, allowed the mischief done in Athaliah's time to remain unrepaired during the whole term of his government.

the money of every one, &c.] Three kinds of sacred money are here distinguished—first, the half shekel required in the Law (Ex. xxx. 13) to be paid by every one above twenty years of age when he passed the numbering; secondly, the money to be paid by such as had devoted themselves, or those belonging to them, by vow to Jehovah, which was a variable sum dependent on age, sex, and property (Lev. xxvii. 2-8); and thirdly, the money offered in the way of free-will offerings.

5. The collection was not to be made at Jerusalem only, but in all "the cities of Judah" (2 Chr. xxiv. 5); the various priests and Levites being collectors in their own neighbourhoods.

breaches] The word in the original includes every kind and degree of ruin or dilapidation.

6. No money had for some time been brought in (marg. ref. g). Perhaps it was difficult for the priests and Levites to know exactly what proportion of the money paid to them was fairly applicable to the Temple service and to their own sup-

- 9 breaches of the house. But Jehoiada the priest took ^aa chest, ^a 2 Chr. 24. 8, &c. and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the ¹door put therein all the money that
- 10 ^{was} brought into the house of the LORD. And it was so, when they saw that ^{there was} much money in the chest, that the king's ²scribe and the high priest came up, and they ³put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.
- 11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they ⁴laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that
- 12 wrought upon the house of the LORD, and to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that ⁵was laid
- 13 out for the house to repair it. Howbeit ⁶there were not made ⁷See 2 Chr. 24. 14. for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money
- 14 ^{that was} brought into the house of the LORD: but they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the
- 15 LORD. Moreover ⁸they reckoned not with the men, into whose ⁹ch. 22. 7. hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen:
- 16 for they dealt faithfully. ¹⁰The trespass money and sin money ¹¹Lev. 5. 15, 18. ¹²Lev. 7. 7. ¹³Num. 18. 0. ¹⁴ch. 8. 12. ¹⁵See 2 Chr. 24. 23. ¹⁶was not brought into the house of the LORD: ¹⁷it was the priests'.
- 17 ¶ Then ¹⁸Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and ¹⁹Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

¹ Heb. threshold.² Or, secretary.³ Heb. bound up.⁴ Heb. brought it forth.⁵ Heb. went forth.

port; and what, consequently, was the balance which they ought to apply to the repairs.

9. *the priests that kept the door*] The north door into the priests' court (Ezek. xl. 35-43) seems to be intended, not the door of the Temple building. The chest must have been placed a little to the right of this north door, between it and the Altar of Burnt-offering, so that the people could see it from the doorway. The people were not ordinarily allowed to go within the doorway into this court, which belonged to the priests and Levites only.

10. *the king's scribe*] Or "secretary" (1 K. iv. 3 note). Such persons are often seen in the Assyrian sculptures, with a roll, apparently of parchment, in one hand and a pen in the other, taking account for the king of the spoil brought in from foreign expeditions.

13. Comparing this verse with the marg. ref., it will be seen that the author of Kings desires to point out, that the repairs were not delayed by any deductions from the money that flowed in. The writer of Chronicles describes what became of the surplus in the chest after the last repairs were completed.

The need of supplying fresh bowls, snuffers, &c., arose from the pollution of those previously used in the Temple service by their application to the Baal worship

during the reigns of Ahaziah and Athaliah (see 2 Chr. xxiv. 7).

16. *The trespass money and the sin money*] In all cases of injury done to another, a man was bound by the Law to make compensation, to the sufferer, if possible; if not, to his nearest kinsman. If the man was dead and had left no kinsman, then the compensation was to be made to the priest (Num. v. 8). This would form a part of the trespass and sin money. The remainder would accrue from the voluntary gifts made to the priests by those who came to make atonement for sins or trespasses (do. v. 10). On the difference between "sins" and "trespasses," see Lev. v. 14 note.

17, 18. There was probably a considerable interval between the conclusion of the arrangement for the repairs and the Syrian expedition related in these verses. For the events which had happened, see 2 Chr. xxiv. 15-22.

17. This is the first and last time that we hear of the Damascene Syrians undertaking so distant an expedition. Gath (see Josh. xiii. 3 note) could only be reached from Syria through Israel or Judah. It was not more than 25 or 30 miles from Jerusalem. It is uncertain whether the city belonged at this time to Judah or to the Philistines.

Hazael set his face, &c.] This is a phrase for determination generally, but especially for determination to proceed somewhere

- ¹1Kia. 15. 18. 18 And Jehoash king of Judah ²took all the hallowed things that
 ch. 13. 15, 16. Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of
 Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the
 gold *that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD,*
 and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria:
 19 and he ¹went away from Jerusalem. ¶ And the rest of the acts
 of Joash, and all that he did, *are they not written in the book*
⁹ch. 11. 5. 20 of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And ⁹his servants
 2 Chr. 24. 25. arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in ²the house of
¹2 Chr. 24. 21 Millo, which goeth down to Silla. For ¹Jozachar the son of
 20, *Zubaa.* Shimeath, and Jehoabad the son of ³Shomer, his servants,
 smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers
 in the city of David: and ⁴Amaziah his son reigned in his
 stead.
 *2Chr. 24. 27. **CHAP. 13.** IN ⁴the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of
 Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign
 2 over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years. And he
 did *that which was evil in the sight of the LORD,* and ⁵followed
 the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to
⁴Judg. 2. 14. 3 sin; he departed not therefrom. And ⁴the anger of the LORD
⁵ch. 8. 12. was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand
⁶Ps. 78. 31. of ⁶Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the
⁷Ex. 3. 7. son of Hazael, all *their days.* And Jehoahaz ⁶besought the
 ch. 14. 26. LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for ⁷he saw the op-
 *ch. 14. 25, 27. 5 (⁷And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out

¹ Heb. went up.² Or, Beth-millo.³ Or, Shimritā.⁴ Heb. the twentieth year

and third year.

⁵ Heb. walked after.

(cp. Jer. xlii. 15; Luke ix. 51). Jerusalem can scarcely have been the primary object of this expedition, or it would have been attacked by a less circuitous route. Perhaps the Syrians were induced to make a sudden march against the Jewish capital, by learning, while at Gath, that a revolution had occurred there (cp. 2 Chr. xxiv. 18-23).

18. Jehoash did not submit without a struggle. See the details in Chronicles. It was not till his army was defeated that he followed the example of his ancestor, Asa, and bought the friendship of the Syrians with the Temple treasures (1 K. xv. 18. Cp. the conduct of Hezekiah, xviii. 15, 16).

Jehoram and Ahaziah] Though these two monarchs had been worshippers of Baal, yet they had combined with that idolatrous cult a certain amount of decent respect for the old religion. It is evident from this passage that they had made costly offerings to the Temple.

20. *a conspiracy*] Cp. marg. ref. Joash, either from a suspicion of intended treason, or from some other unknown cause, took up his abode in the fortress of Millo (1 K. ix. 24). This conspiracy was connected with religion. Soon after the death of Jehoiaada, Joash had apostatised; had renewed the worship of Baal; and, despite of many prophetic warnings, had persisted

in his evil courses, even commanding Zechariah to be slain when he rebuked them (2 Chr. xxiv. 18-27). The conspirators, who wished to avenge Zechariah, no doubt wished also to put down the Baal worship. In this it appears that they succeeded. For, though Amaziah punished the actual murderers after a while (xiv. 5), yet he appears not to have been a Baal-worshipper. The only idolatries laid to his charge are the maintenance of the high places (xiv. 4), and a worship of the gods of Edom (2 Chr. xxv. 14-20).

Silla] This place is quite unknown.

XIII. In this chapter the history of the kingdom of Israel is traced through the two reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoash. In ch. xiv. the history of Judah is resumed.

in the three and twentieth year] Rather, the "one and twentieth year." See v. 10.

3. *all their days*] Lit. "all the days." Not "all the days" of the two Syrian kings, for Ben-hadad lost to Joash all the cities which he had gained from Jehoahaz (v. 25); but either "all the days of Jehoahaz" (v. 22), or "all the days of Hazael"—both while he led his own armies, and while they were led by his son.

5. *the LORD gave Israel a saviour*] Not immediately on the repentance of Jehoahaz, but after his death (see v. 25).

from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel
 6 dwelt in their tents, ¹as beforetime. Nevertheless they departed
 not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel
 sin, *but* ²walked therein: ³and there remained the grove also in
 7 Samaria.) Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but
 fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen;
 8 for the king of Syria had destroyed them, ⁴and had made them
 like the dust by threshing. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jeho-
 9 ahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in
 the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehoahaz
 10 slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and
 11 ⁵Joash his son reigned in his stead. ¶ In the thirty and seventh
 year of Joash king of Judah began ⁶Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz
 12 to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. And
 he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed
 not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made
 13 Israel sin: *but* he walked therein. ⁷And the rest of the acts of
 Joash, and ⁸all that he did, and ⁹his might wherewith he fought
 against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book
 14 of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Joash slept with
 his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was
 15 buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. ¶ Now Elisha was
 fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king
 of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said,
 O my father, my father, ¹⁰the chariot of Israel, and the horse-
 16 men thereof. And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows.
 And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the
 king of Israel, ¹¹Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his
 hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

¹ 1Kin.16.33.

² Amos 1. 3.

³ ch. 14. 15.

⁴ See ver. 14. & 25.

⁵ ch.14.9, &c.
⁶ 2 Chr. 25. 17, &c.

⁷ ch. 2. 12.

¹ Heb. *as yesterday*, and
² *third day*.

³ Heb. *he walked*.

⁴ Heb. *stood*.

⁵ ver. 10, *Jehozah*.

⁶ Alone.

⁷ In consort with his father,
 ch. 14. 1.

⁸ Heb. *Make thine hand to ride*.

they went out from under the hand of the Syrians] i.e. they ceased to be oppressed by the Syrians; they shook off their yoke, and became once more perfectly independent.

6. but walked therein] Rather, "he walked therein," meaning Joash, the "saviour" of the preceding verse.

there remained the grove also in Samaria] It seems strange that Jehu had not destroyed this when he put down the worship of Baal (x. 26-28). Perhaps the "grove" or "Asherah" worship was too closely connected with the old worship in high places to be set aside with the same ease as the rites newly introduced from Phœnicia.

7. The meaning is that "he, the king of Syria" (v. 4 Hazael) limited the standing army of Jehoahaz.

like the dust by threshing] An expression not only employed metaphorically, and importing defeat, conquest, and grinding oppression (Jer. li. 33; Mic. iv. 12), but implying also the literal use of threshing-instruments in the execution of prisoners of war (marg. ref., and cp. 2 Sam. xii. 31).

12, 13. According to ordinary laws of historical composition, these verses should

form the closing paragraph of the present chapter.

14. The closing scene of Elisha's life. It was now at least sixty-three years since his call, so that he was at this time very possibly above ninety. He seems to have lived in almost complete retirement from the time he sent the young Prophet to anoint Jehu king (ix. 1). And now it was not he who sought the king, but the king who sought him. Apparently, the special function of the two great Israelite Prophets (Elijah and Elisha) was to counteract the noxious influence of the Baalistic rites; and, when these ceased, their extraordinary ministry came to an end.

the chariot of Israel, &c.] See marg. ref. Joash must have known the circumstances of Elijah's removal, which were perhaps already entered in the "book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel;" and he must have intended to apply to Elisha his own words on that solemn occasion; "Thou too art about to leave us, and to follow Elijah—thou who hast been since his departure, that which he was while he remained on earth, the true defence of Israel."

16. *Elisha put his hands upon the king's*

- 17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in ^mAphek, till
^m 1 Kin. 20. 26. 18 thou have consumed *them*. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon
ⁿ 7er. 25. 19 the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: "whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but
20 thrice. ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the
21 year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of *men*; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man ¹ was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.
^o ch. 8. 12. 22 ¶ But ^oHazaël king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of
^p ch. 14. 27. 23 Jehoahaz. ^pAnd the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and ^qhad respect unto them, ^rbecause of
^r Ex. 32. 13.

¹ Heb. *went down*.

hands] A symbolical act, indicating that the successes, which the shooting typified, were to come, not from human skill, or strength, or daring, but from the Presence and the power of God.

17. *eastward*] Syria of Damascus lay partly east, but still more north, of the Holy Land. The arrow was to be shot, *eastward*, not so much against Syria itself as against the scene of the recent Syrian successes, Gilead (x. 33), which was also to be the scene of Joash's victories over them. Aphek is almost due east from Shunem, where it is not unlikely that Elisha now was.

the arrow, &c.] Lit. "An arrow of deliverance from the Lord, and an arrow of deliverance against Syria; and thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, even to consuming."

18. *Smite upon the ground*] Some prefer to render—"Shoot to the ground;" i.e. "Shoot arrows from the window into the ground outside, as if thou wert shooting against an enemy."

19. The unfaithfulness of man limits the goodness of God. Though Joash did the Prophet's bidding, it was without any zeal or fervour; and probably without any earnest belief in the efficacy of what he was doing. Cp. Mark vi. 5, 6. God had been willing to give the Israelites complete victory over Syria (v. 17); but Joash by his non-acceptance of the divine promise in its fulness had checked the outflow of mercy; and the result was that the original promise could not be fulfilled.

20. *the bands of the Moabites invaded the land*] The Moabites had been increasing in strength ever since their revolt from Ahab (i. 1). The defeat which they suffered at the hands of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat

(iii. 24) did not affect their subjugation. They spread themselves into the country north of the Arnon (Isai. xvi. 2), and thence proceeded to make plundering expeditions year by year into Samaria, in Spring. This was the natural season for incursions, as then in Palestine the crops began to be ripe.

21. *they cast the man*] Rather, "they thrust the man." The graves of the Jews were not pits dug in the ground, like ours, but caves or cells excavated in the side of a rock, the mouth of the cave being ordinarily shut by a heavy stone.

stood up on his feet] Coffins were not used by the Jews. The body was simply wrapped or swathed in grave-clothes (cp. Luke vii. 15; John xi. 44).

This miracle of Elisha's after his death is more surprising than any of those which he performed during his lifetime. The Jews regarded it as his highest glory (cp. Eccus. xlviii. 13, 14). It may be said to belong to a class of Scriptural miracles, cases, i.e. where the miracle was not wrought through the agency of a living miracle-worker, but by a material object in which, by God's will, "virtue" for the time resided (cp. Acts xix. 12). The primary effect of the miracle was, no doubt, greatly to increase the reverence of the Israelites for the memory of Elisha, to lend force to his teaching, and especially to add weight to his unfulfilled prophecies, as to that concerning the coming triumphs of Israel over Syria. In the extreme state of depression to which the Israelites were now reduced, a very signal miracle may have been needed to encourage and reassure them.

23. The writer regards the Captivity of Israel as God's "casting them out of His sight" (see xvii. 18, 20); and notes that this

his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his ¹presence as yet. 24 So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in 25 his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz ²took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. *Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel. • ver. 18, 19.

CHAP. 14. IN ^athe second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of ^a ch. 13. 10.
² Israel reigned ^bAmaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He ^b 2 Chr. 25. 1.
 was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
 3 name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was
 right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he
 4 did according to all things as Joash his father did. ^cHowbeit ^c ch. 12. 3.
 the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did
 5 sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places. And it came to
 pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he
 6 slew his servants ^dwhich had slain the king his father. But ^d ch. 12. 20.
 the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that
 which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the
 LORD commanded, saying, ^eThe fathers shall not be put to death
 for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers;
 7 but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. ^fHe slew
 of Edom in ^gthe valley of salt ten thousand, and took ^hSelah
^e Deut. 24. 16.
^f Ezek. 18. 4, 20.
^g 2 Chr. 25. 5-13.
^h 2 Sam. 8. 13. Ps. 60, title.

¹ Heb. face.

² Heb. returned and took.

³ Or, The rock.

extreme punishment, though deserved, was by God's mercy not allowed to fall on them as yet.

24. So Hazael...died] Literally, "And Hazael died," a fact not mentioned before.

25. the cities which, &c.] Probably cities west of the Jordan, since the tract east of that river was conquered, mainly if not wholly, in the reign of Jehu (x. 33).

XIV. The history of Judah is resumed (1-22), followed by a brief account of the contemporary history of Israel under Jeroboam II. (vv. 23-29). The earlier narrative runs parallel with 2 Chr. xxv.

2. Joash of Judah reigned forty years (xii. 1), and Joash of Israel ascended the throne in his namesake's thirty-seventh year (xiii. 10); hence we should have expected to hear that Amaziah succeeded his father in the fourth rather than in the second year of Joash (of Israel). The usual explanation of the discrepancy is to suppose a double accession of the Israelitish Joash—as co-partner with his father in the thirty-seventh year of his namesake, as sole king two years afterwards.

3. he did...as Joash] There is a curious parity between the lives of Joash and Amaziah. Both were zealous for Jehovah in the earlier portion of their reigns, but in the latter part fell away; both disregarded the rebukes of Prophets; and both, having forsaken God, were in the end conspired against and slain (cp. 2 Chr. xxiv. 25, xxv. 27).

5. The phrase, "confirmed in his hand"

(xv. 19), usually expresses the authorisation of a new reign by an imperial superior (see xv. 19 note); but here it describes the result when the troubles consequent upon the murder of Joash had passed away. The new king's authority was generally recognised by his subjects.

6. the children of the murderers he slew not] This seems to be noted as a rare instance of clemency (cp. ix. 26 note). It is strange at first sight, that, when the Law contained so very plain a prohibition (marg. ref.), the contrary practice should have established itself. But we must remember, first, that the custom was that of the East generally (see Dan. vi. 24); and secondly, that it had the sanction of one who might be thought to have known thoroughly the mind of the legislator, viz. Joshua (see Josh. vii. 24, 25).

7. Amaziah's Idumean war is treated at length by the writer of Chronicles (marg. ref.).

The "Valley of Salt" is usually identified with the broad open plain called the Sabkah, at the southern end of the Dead Sea—the continuation of the Ghor or Jordan gorge. At the north-western corner of this plain stands a mountain of rock-salt, and the tract between this mountain and the sea is a salt-marsh. Salt springs also abound in the plain itself, so that the name would be fully accounted for. It is doubted, however, whether the original of the word "valley," commonly used of clefts and ra-

^a Josh. 15. 33.
^f 2 Chr. 25.
 17, 18, &c.

^a See Judg.
 9. 8.
¹ 1 Kin. 4. 33.

^m Dent. 9. 14.
 2 Chr. 32. 25.
 Ezek. 23. 2,
 5, 17.
 Hab. 2. 4.

^a Josh. 19. 33.
 & 21. 10.

^o Neh. 8. 10.
 & 12. 39.
^p Jer. 31. 33.
 Zech. 14. 10.
^q 1 Kin. 7. 51.

by war, ^a and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.
 8 ¶ Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, ^b The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the ^c cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast 10 that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and ^m thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of *this*, and tarry ¹ at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with 11 thee? But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at ⁿ Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to 12 Judah. And Judah ² was put to the worse before Israel; and 13 they fled every man to their tents. And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from ^o the gate of Ephraim unto 14 ^p the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And he took all ^q the

¹ Heb. *at thy house*.

² Heb. *was smitten*.

vines, can be applied to such a sunk plain as the Sabkah; and it is certainly most unlikely that 10,000 prisoners would have been conveyed upwards of eighty miles (the distance of the Sabkah from Petra), through a rough and difficult country, only in order to be massacred. On the whole, it is perhaps most probable that the "Valley of Salt" yet remains to be discovered, and that its true position was near Selah or Petra (see Judg. i. 36 note). Amaziah gave to Petra the name Joktheel, "subdued by God," in a religious spirit, as an acknowledgment of the divine aid by which his victory was gained. The name failed to take permanent hold on the place, because the Edomites, on not long afterwards recovering their city, restored the old appellation (2 Chr. xxviii. 17; cp. Isai. xvi. 1, and Am. i. 11).

unto this day] The writer of Kings evidently gives the exact words of his document, composed not later than the reign of Ahaz, before whose death the Edomites had recovered Petra.

8. Amaziah's success against Edom had so elated him that he thought himself more than a match for his northern neighbour. The grounds of the quarrel between them were furnished by the conduct of the hired, but dismissed, Israelite soldiers (see marg. ref.).

let us look one another in the face] i.e. "let us meet face to face in arms, and try each other's strength" (rv. 11, 12).

9. The Oriental use of apologies on the most solemn and serious occasions is well known to all, and scarcely needs illustration (cp. marg. ref.). It is a common feature of such apologies that they are not exact parallels to the case whereto they are applied, but only general or partial resemblances.

Hence there is need of caution in applying the several points of the illustration.

10. *glory of this*, &c.] Lit. "Be honoured" i.e. "Enjoy thy honour—be content with it." "Why wilt thou meddle with misfortune?"

11. Jehoash did not wait to be attacked. Invading Judæa from the west, and so ascending out of the low coast tract, he met the army of Amaziah at Beth-shemesh (see Josh. xix. 21 note), about 15 miles from Jeru'a'em.

12. The author of Chronicles notes that Amaziah's obstinacy, and his consequent defeat and captivity, were judgments upon him for an idolatry into which he had fallen after his conquest of Edom (2 Chr. xxv. 14, 20).

13. The object of breaking down the wall was to leave Jerusalem at the mercy of her rival; and it must have been among the conditions of the peace that the breach thus made should not be repaired.

Gates in Oriental cities are named from the places to which they lead. The gate of Ephraim must therefore have been a north gate: perhaps also known, later on, by the name of the "gate of Benjamin" (Jer. xxxvii. 13; Zech. xiv. 10). The corner gate was probably a gate at the north-west angle of the city, where the north wall approached the Valley of Hinnom. The entire breach was thus in the north wall, on the side where Jerusalem was naturally the weakest. Josephus says that Joash drove his chariot through the breach into the town, a practice not unusual with conquerors.

14. This is the only distinct mention of "hostages" in the Old Testament. It would seem that the Oriental conquerors generally regarded the terror of their arms as sufficient

- gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead. ¶ And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoshaphat son of Jehoshaphat king of Israel fifteen years. And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. ¶ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the
- ch. 13. 13
2 Chr. 25. 25, &c.
2 Chr. 25. 27.
Josh. 10. 3.
ch. 15. 13.
2 Chr. 26. 1, he is called Uzziah.
ch. 10. 6.
2 Chr. 20. 2.
Num. 13. 21.
& 34. 8.
Deut. 3. 17.
Jonah 1. 1.
Matt. 12. 39, 40, called Jonas.

to secure the performance of the engagements contracted towards them.

15, 16. These two verses (repeated from xiii. 12, 13) are out of place here, where they interrupt the history of Amaziah's reign.

20. *they brought him on horses*] i.e. they conveyed his body back to Jerusalem in the royal chariot. The combination of relentless animosity against the living prince with the deepest respect for his dead remains is very characteristic of an Oriental people.

21. *all the people of Judah*] The words imply that the conspiracy was one in which the general mass of the people did not participate. There was no confusion and trouble as on the occasion of the murder of Joash. Azariah ("the strength of Jehovah"), and Uzziah ("whom Jehovah assists"), were mere variants of one name.

22. Elath, or Eloth (marg. ref. 1 K. ix. 26), was near Ezion-Geber, in the Gulf of Akabah. It had been lost to the Jews on the revolt of Edom from Joram (viii. 22). Uzziah's re-establishment of the place, rendered possible by his father's successes (v. 7), was one of his first acts, and seems to imply a desire to renew the commercial projects which Solomon had successfully carried out, and which Jehoshaphat had vainly attempted (1 K. xxii. 48).

23. *Jeroboam*] This is the only instance, in the history of either kingdom, of a recurrent royal appellation. We can scarcely

doubt that Jeroboam II. was named after the great founder of the Israelite kingdom by a father who trusted that he might prove a sort of second founder. Perhaps the prophecy of Jonah (see v. 25) had been already given, and it was known that a great deliverance was approaching.

25. *He restored the coast of Israel*] Jeroboam, in the course of his long reign, recovered the old boundaries of the Holy Land to the north, the east, and the south-east. The "entering in of Hamath" is spoken of as the northern boundary; the "sea of the plain," or the Dead Sea, is the southern boundary (see marg. ref.): here Israel adjoined on Moab. The entire tract east of Jordan had been lost to Israel in the reign of Jehu and that of Jehoshaphat (x. 33, xiii. 3, 25). All this was now recovered: and not only so, but Moab was reduced (Amos vi. 14), and the Syrians were in their turn forced to submit to the Jews (v. 28). The northern conquests were perhaps little less important than the eastern (do.).

the word of the LORD...which he spake] Some have found the prophecy of Jonah here alluded to, or a portion of it, in Isaiah xv. and xvi. (see xvi. 13); but without sufficient grounds.

This passage tends to fix Jonah's date to some period not very late in the reign of Jeroboam II., i.e. (according to the ordinary chronology) from B.C. 823 to B.C. 782. On Gath-hepher, see marg. ref. and note.

- * Josh. 19. 13. 26 son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of Gath-hepher. For
 * ch. 13. 4. the LORD ^asaw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter :
 * Deut. 32. 36. for ^athere was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for
 / ch. 13. 5. 27 Israel. / And the LORD said not that he would blot out the
 name of Israel from under heaven : but he saved them by the
 28 hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. ¶ Now the rest of the acts
 of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred,
 and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, ^awhich belonged
 to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the
 29 chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jeroboam slept with his
 fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and ^aZachariah his son
 reigned in his stead.
- CHAP. 15. IN the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of
 Israel ^abegan ^bAzariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.
 2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned
 two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was*
 3 Jecholiah of Jerusalem. And he did *that which was* right in
 the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah
 4 had done; ^asave that the high places were not removed: the
 people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places:
 5 ¶ And the LORD ^asmote the king, so that he was a leper unto
 the day of his death, and ^adwelt in a several house. And Jotham
 the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the
 6 land. And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did,
 are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings
 7 of Judah? So Azariah slept with his fathers; and ^athey buried
 him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son
 8 reigned in his stead. ¶ In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah
 king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over

^a 2 Sam. 8. 6.

1 Kin. 11. 24.

2 Chr. 8. 3.

^a After an
interreg-
num of 11
years,

ch. 15. 8.

^a ch. 14. 21.

2 Chr. 26. 1,

3, 4.

^b called

Uzziah,

ver. 13. 30,

&c.

& 2 Chr. 26. 1.

^a ver. 35.

ch. 12. 3.

& 14. 4.

^a 2 Chr. 26.

19-21.

^a Lev. 13. 40.

/ 2 Chr. 26. 23.

26. *the affliction of Israel*] That which the Israelites had suffered for two reigns at the hands of the Syrians (x. 32, 33, xiii. 3, 7, 22). *there was not any shut up, nor any left*] A phrase implying complete depopulation (see marg. ref. note; 1 K. xiv. 10), but here meaning no more than extreme depression and weakness.

27. *And the LORD said not*] Though the Israelites were brought thus low, yet the fiat did not as yet go forth for their destruction. God did not send a Prophet to say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but on the contrary sent two to announce that they should be delivered from their present enemies, and obtain triumphs over them (see v. 25, xiii. 17-19).

that he would blot out, &c.] This is a Mosiac phrase, found only here and in Deuteronomy (ix. 14, xxix. 20).

28. *he recovered Damascus*] Jeroboam probably gained certain advantages over Ben-hadad, which induced the latter to make his submission and consent to such terms as those extorted by Ahab (1 K. xx. 34).

Hamath was probably among the actual conquests of Jeroboam. It was brought so low in his reign, as to have become almost a by-word for calamity (cp. Amos vi. 2).

which belonged to Judah, for Israel] i.e.

these cities were recovered to Judah, i.e. to the people of God generally, through or by means of being added to Israel, i.e. to the northern kingdom.

A few further facts in the history of Jeroboam II. are recorded by the prophet Amos (cp. ch. vii. 10 &c.).

XV. 5. *the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper*] The circumstances under which this terrible affliction befel one of the greatest of the Jewish kings, are given at some length by the author of Chronicles (marg. ref.), who supplies us with a tolerably full account of this important reign, which the writer of Kings dismisses in half-a-dozen verses.

a several house] "A house of liberation," or, freedom. On the necessity, under which the Law placed lepers, of living apart from other men, see marg. ref. Jotham became regent in his father's room, and exercised the functions of judge (1 K. iii. 9 note), from the time that his father became a leper.

8. *In the thirty and eighth year*] Rather, according to the previous numbers (xiv. 23, xv. 2), the 27th year of Azariah. Some suppose an interregnum between Jeroboam and Zachariah, which, however, is very improbable.

- 9 Israel in Samaria six months. And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and ⁹smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. This was ^athe word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass. ¶ Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of 'Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned ¹a full month in Samaria. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from ^kTirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ¶ Then Menahem smote 'Tiphshah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all ^mthe women therein that were with child he ripped up. In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. And ⁿPul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a

⁹ As prophesied, Amos 7. 9.

^a ch. 10. 30.

¹ Matt. 1. 8, 9, called Ozias, and ver. 1. Azariah. ^k 1 Kin. 14. 17.

¹ 1 Kin. 4. 24

^m ch. 8. 12.

ⁿ 1 Chr. 5. 26. Isai. 9. 1. Hos. 8. 9.

Heb. a month of days.

10. *before the people*] i.e. openly and publicly. The LXX. turns the original of the above words into a proper name, Keblaam, and makes him the actual assassin, but without much ground.

14. Tirzah, the old capital, once more appears as a place of importance, giving birth to the pretender, who alone of all these later kings died a natural death, and left the crown to his son (v. 22). It would seem from the present passage to have been on lower ground than Samaria.

16. With respect to the supposed inability of Menahem to lead an expedition to Tiphshah (Thapsacus, see marg. ref.) on the Euphrates, we may note in the first place that such an expedition was a natural sequel to Jeroboam's occupation of Hamath (xiv. 28); and further, that it would have been greatly facilitated by the weakness of Assyria at this time, that empire having fallen into a state of depression about B.C. 780.

19. This is the first distinct mention which we find in Scripture of Assyria as an aggressive power. From the native monuments we learn that she had been for above a century pushing her conquests beyond the Euphrates, and seeking to reduce under her dominion the entire tract between that river and Egypt. Jehu had paid tribute. Some—arguing from the use of the phrase “confirmed the kingdom”

(here, and in xiv. 5)—think that Jehoahaz had acknowledged Assyrian suzerainty, and consented that her monarchs should receive their investiture from the hands of the Ninevite king. But hitherto there had been no hostile invasion of Jewish or Israelite soil by an Assyrian army. Now, however, the Assyrians are at last formally introduced into the history. A series of aggressions is related in this and the four following chapters, culminating, on the one hand, in the destruction of the northern kingdom, on the other, in the complete failure of Sennacherib's attempt upon Judaea and Egypt.

With respect to the present expedition, there are certain difficulties. The name of Pul does not appear among the Assyrian monumental kings, and it is absent from the copies of the Assyrian Canon, containing the entire list of monarchs from about B.C. 910 to B.C. 670. Assyria Proper, moreover, appears to have been in a state of depression for some forty years before the accession of Tiglath-Pileser (v. 29). It is probable that, during the depression of the Ninevite line, Pul, a Chaldean and not an Assyrian king, established a second monarchy upon the Euphrates, which claimed to be the true Assyria, and was recognised as such by the nations of Syria and Palestine. His invasion was probably provoked by Menahem's conquest of Thapsacus,

- thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to
 ° ch. 14. 5. 20 °confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem¹ exacted the
 money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty men of wealth, of
 each man fifty shekels of silver; to give to the king of Assyria.
 So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there
 21 in the land. ¶ And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all
 that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles
 22 of the kings of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers;
 23 and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. ¶ In the fiftieth
 year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem
 began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.
 24 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he
 departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who
 25 made Israel to sin. But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain
 of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the
 palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him
 fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in
 26 his room. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that
 he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of
 27 the kings of Israel. ¶ In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah
 king of Judah² Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over
 28 Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years. And he did *that*
which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from
 the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
 29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel³ came Tiglath-pileser king
 of Assyria, and took⁴ Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah,

² Isai. 7. 1.

³ 1 Chr. 5. 20.
 Isai. 0. 1.
⁴ 1 Kin. 15.
 20.

¹ Heb. *caused to come forth*.

which he would view as a wanton aggression upon his territory.

a thousand talents of silver] Compared with the tribute of Hezekiah soon afterwards (xviii. 14), this seems a large sum; but it is not beyond the resources of such a State as Samaria at the period. The tie which had bound Samaria to Assyria from the reign of Jehu to that of Jeroboam II., had ceased to exist during the period of Assyrian depression. Menahem now renewed it, undertaking the duties of a tributary, and expecting the support which Assyria was accustomed to lend to her dependencies in their struggles with their neighbours. Hence the reproaches of Hosea (marg. ref. n).

20. *Menahem exacted the money*] The kings of Israel had no such ready resource in difficulties as that possessed by the kings of Judah in the Temple treasury (xii. 18, xvi. 8). Hence, the forced contribution from the people, the odium of which was diminished by confining the levy to the comparatively rich.

each man fifty shekels] As the silver talent contained 3000 shekels, the levy of fifty shekels a head must have extended to 60,000 persons.

21. Assyrian inscriptions show that Menahem was subsequently reduced to subjection by Tiglath-Pileser (r. 29).

25. *a captain of his*] A mere "captain," a person, therefore, of very moderate rank.

The low birth of Pekah is probably glanced at in Isaiah's favourite designation of him as "Remaliah's son" (Isai. vii. 4, 5, 9, viii. 6).

From the fact that Pekah employed Gileadites to carry out his designs, it has been conjectured that he himself belonged to the trans-Jordanic region.

in the palace of the king's house] Rather, "In the tower of the king's palace;" or possibly "in the harem of the king's palace" (1 K. xvi. 18 note).

29. Tiglath-Pileser is the first among the Assyrian monarchs of Scripture whom we can certainly identify with a king mentioned in the monuments. According to the Assyrian Canon he reigned from B.C. 745 to B.C. 727; and the monuments show us this energetic and powerful prince (though, probably, an usurper), building and repairing palaces, levying armies, and carrying on successful wars against Merodach-Baladan in Babylonia, Rezin at Damascus, Hiram at Tyre, the Medes, the Armenians, the natives of Northern Mesopotamia, and the Arabs who bordered upon Egypt. His Assyrian name, Tiglat-pal-zira, is composed of the elements *tiglat*, "adoration," *pal*, "son," and *zira*, a word of uncertain meaning.

Ijon and Abel-beth-maachah] On the position of some of the towns mentioned in this verse see marg. ref. and Josh. xix. 36. Janoah is not the Janohah of Josh. xvi. 6

- and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land
 30 of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. ¶ And
 Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekuh the
 son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in
 his stead, 'in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.
 31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold,
 they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
 32 Israel. ¶ In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of
 Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.
 33 Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and
 he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
 34 was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And he did that which
 was right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that
 35 his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit the high places were
 not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in
 the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the
 36 LORD. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he
 did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the
 37 kings of Judah? ¶ In those days the LORD began to send
 against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son
 38 of Remaliah. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was
 buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and
 Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.
- CHAP. 16.** IN the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah
 2 Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Twenty
 years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen
 years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the
 3 sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. But he
 walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his

* After an
 anarchy for
 some years,
 ch. 17. 1.
 Hos. 10. 3,
 7, 16.
 † In the
 fourth year
 of Ahaz, in
 the twen-
 tieth year
 after Joth-
 am had
 begun to
 reign: *Ush.*
 * 2 Chr. 27. 1.
 * ver. 3.
 † ver. 4.
 * 2 Chr. 27.
 3, &c.

* ch. 16. 5.
 † ver. 27.

* 2 Chr. 28.
 1, &c.

† Lev. 18. 21.
 † 2 Chr. 28. 7.

(modern *Yanin*, S.E. of Nablous), but a city (? *Hunin*) near the Sea of Merom. Gilead is, probably, to be limited here to a small district of Peræa, lying to the east of Lake Merom, and in later times known as Gaulanitis (the reading of LXX. here). If so, we must suppose two expeditions of Tiglath-Pileser against Pekah, the first mentioned here, and the second recorded in Chronicles and Isaiah (see marg. ref. *q*; xvi. 9 note).

30. *Hoshea, the son of Elah*] One of Pekah's friends, according to Josephus.

the twentieth year of Jotham] According to *v.* 33 and 2 Chr. xxvii. 1, Jotham reigned only sixteen years. See also the suggestion in the margin. Strangely enough, this first year of Hoshea is also called, not the fourth, but the twelfth of Ahaz (xvii. 1). The chronological confusion of the history, as it stands, is striking.

Uzziah] i.e. Azariah. See *vr.* 1-4.

31. *the rest of the acts of Pekah*] On these, see xvi. 5 note.

32. The writer here resumes the history of Judah from *v.* 7, to resume and conclude the history of Israel in ch. xvii.

34. Jotham imitated his father in all respects, excepting in his impious usurpation of the priestly functions (*v.* 5 note; 2 Chr. xxvii. 2).

35. *He built the higher gate*] Jotham

followed the example of his father in military, no less than in religious, matters (*cp.* marg. ref. with 2 Chr. xxvi. 9). The "higher" or "upper gate" of the Temple is thought to have been that towards the north; and its fortification would seem to indicate fear of an attack from that quarter.

37. The recent invasions of Pul and Tiglath-Pileser had effectually alarmed Pekah and Rezin, and had induced them to put aside the traditional jealousies which naturally kept them apart, and to make a league offensive and defensive. Into this league they were anxious that Judah should enter; but they distrusted the house of David, which had been so long hostile both to Damascus and to Samaria. They consequently formed the design of transferring the Jewish crown to a certain Ben-Tabael (Isai. vii. 6), probably a Jewish noble, perhaps a refugee at one of their courts, whom they could trust to join heartily in their schemes (xvi. 5 note).

XVI. 3. Ahaz was the worst of all the kings of Judah. He imitated the worst of the Israelite kings—Ahab and Ahaziah,—by a re-introduction of the Baal worship, which had been rooted out of Israel by Jehu and out of Judah by Jehoiada.

and made his son to pass through the fire]

- * Deut. 12. 31. son to pass through the fire, according to the 'abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and 'on the hills, and under every green tree. ¶ Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from ¹Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. So Ahaz sent messengers ²to ³Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz ⁴took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against ⁵Damascus, and ⁶took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

¹ Heb. *Eloth*.

1 Chr. 5. 26. & 2 Chr. 1. 8.

³ Heb. *Dammeseck*.

² Heb. *Tiglath-pileser*.

20, *Tiglath-pileser*.

i.e. Ahaz adopted the Moloch worship of the Ammonites and Moabites (iii. 27; Mic. vi. 7), and sacrificed at least one son, probably his firstborn, according to the horrid rites of those nations, and the Canaanite tribes (Deut. xii. 31; Ps. cvi. 37, 38). Hitherto, apparently, the Jews had been guiltless of this abomination. They had been warned against it by Moses (marg. ref.; Deut. xviii. 10); and if (as some think) they had practised it in the wilderness (Ezek. xx. 26; Am. v. 26), the sin must have been rare and exceptional; from the date of their entrance into the Promised Land they had wholly put it away. Now, however, it became so frequent (cp. xvii. 17, xxi. 6) as to meet with the strongest protest from Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer. vii. 31, 32, xix. 2-6; xxxii. 35; Ezek. xvi. 20, xx. 26, xxiii. 37, &c.).

4. *he sacrificed, &c.*] Other kings of Judah had allowed their people to do so. Ahaz was the first, so far as we know, to countenance the practice by his own example.

5. Rezin and Pekah, who had already begun their attacks upon Judah in the reign of Jotham (xv. 37), regarded the accession of a boy-king, only sixteen years of age, as peculiarly favourable to their projects, and proceeded without loss of time to carry them out. The earlier scenes of the war, omitted by the writer of Kings, are given at some length in 2 Chr. xxviii. 5-15.

6. Either during the siege, or on breaking up from before Jerusalem, Rezin made an expedition to the Red Sea coast, and became master of the city which had belonged to Judah about seventy years (marg. ref.). Most moderns render this verse, "Rezin recovered (or restored) Elath to Edom, ... and the Edomites came to Elath."

On the resemblance of the words Aram and Edom in the original, see 2 Sam. viii. 12 note.

7. Ahaz was threatened on all sides, on the north by Rezin and Pekah; on the south-east by Edom (2 Chr. xxviii. 17); and on the south-west by the Philistines (do. 18). To these external dangers was added the still greater peril of disaffection at home. A large party in Judah was "weary" of the house of David (Is. vii. 13), ready to join the confederacy (do. viii. 6, 12), and to accept for king "the son of Tabeal." Ahaz saw no hope of safety unless he could obtain a powerful protector; and, Egypt being particularly weak at this time, he turned to Assyria.

8. Cp. marg. ref. and 1 K. xv. 18. Political necessity was always held to justify the devotion of the Temple treasure to secular purposes.

9. The submission of Judah, which Ahaz proffered, would be of the utmost importance in connexion with any projects that might be entertained of Egyptian conquests. Naturally, Damascus was the first object of attack. It was the head of the confederacy, and it lay nearest to an army descending upon Lower Syria, as all Asiatic armies would descend, from the north. It appears from an inscription of Tiglath-pileser's, that Rezin met him in the field, was defeated, and slain. An attack upon Pekah followed. Now probably it was that the entire trans-Jordanic region was overrun; and that the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were carried into captivity (1 Chr. v. 26). Megiddo and Dor appear also to have been occupied, and the Arabs of the south chastised. Tiglath-pileser then returned to Damascus, where a son of Rezin had assumed the crown; he besieged and took the city, and punished

- 13 ¶ And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus. And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and ^kthe king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of ^lhis peace offerings upon the altar. And he brought also ^lthe brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn ^mthe morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire by. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. ¶ And king Ahaz cut off ⁿthe borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down ^pthe sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and

^k 2 Chr. 26.
16, 19.

^l 2 Chr. 4. 1.

^m Ex. 29. 39,
40, 41.

ⁿ 2 Chr. 23.

^o 1 Kin. 7.

^p 1 Kin. 7.

27, 23.

29, 25.

¹ Hob. *which were his*.

Rezin's son with death. Tiglath-pileser appears by one of his inscriptions to have held a court at Damascus, to which it is probable that the tributary kings of the neighbourhood were summoned to pay their tributes and do homage for their kingdoms. Among the tributes brought to him at this time, those of Judæa, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Gaza, Ascalon, and Tyre, are mentioned.

[*Kir*] Kir is mentioned by Amos (ix. 7) as the country from which the Syrians came. It is joined by Isaiah (xxii. 6) with Elam or Elymais. Its position can only be conjectured. Perhaps the word designates a region adjoining Elymais, in the extreme south-eastern limits of Assyria.

10. *and saw an altar*] Rather, "The altar," i.e. an Assyrian altar, and connected with that formal recognition of the Assyrian deities which the Ninevite monarchs appear to have required of all the nations whom they received into their empire.

[*the fashion of the altar*] Assyrian altars were not very elaborate, but they were very different from the Jewish. They were comparatively small, and scarcely suited for "whole burnt-offerings." One type was square, about half the height of a man, and ornamented round the top with a sort of battlement. Another had a triangular base and a circular top consisting of a single flat stone. A third was a sort of portable stand, narrow, and about the height of a man.

This last was of the kind which the kings took with them in their expeditions.

14. Hitherto the "Brasen Altar" (marg. ref.) had, it would seem, occupied a position directly in front of the Temple porch, which it exactly equalled in width. Now Ahaz removed it from this place, and gave the honourable position to his new altar, which he designed to supersede the old for all ordinary purposes (v. 15).

[*from between the altar, &c.*] Urijah, having received no official directions, had placed the new altar in front of the old, between it and the eastern gate of the court. Ahaz consequently on his arrival found the brasen altar "between the (new) altar and the house of the Lord."

15. *the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire by*] The bulk of modern commentators translate—"As for the Brasen Altar, it will be for me to enquire (or consider) what I shall do with it."

16. The writer condemns the obsequiousness of Urijah, whose conduct was the more inexcusable after the noble example of his predecessor Azariah (2 Chr. xxvi. 17-20).

17. See marg. ref. The acts recorded here, were probably not mere wanton acts of mutilation, but steps in the conversion of these sacred objects to other uses, as to the ornamentation of a palace or of an idol temple. The bases, the oxen, and the sea were not destroyed—they remained at Jerusalem till its final capture (Jer. lii.

- 18 put it upon a pavement of stones. And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and ^awas buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

^a After an interregnum, ch. 15. 30.
^b ch. 18. 9.

CHAP. 17. IN the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began ^aHoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up ^bShalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and ^cgave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut

¹ Heb. rendered, 2 Sam. 8. 2.

² Or, tribute.

17, 20). Probably they were restored to their original uses by Hezekiah (2 Chr. xxix. 19).

a pavement of stones] Probably a pavement made expressly, for the stones of the court seem to have been covered with a planking of cedar (1 K. vi. 36, vii. 12).

18. the covert...in the house] A canopyed seat in the Temple for the king and his family when they attended public worship on the sabbath. It stood no doubt in the inner court of the Temple.

the king's entry without] This would seem to have been a private passage by which the king crossed the outer court to the east gate of the inner court when he visited the Temple (Ezek. xlvi. 1, 2).

turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria] This passage is very obscure. Some translate—"altered he in the house of the Lord, because of the king of Assyria," supposing the "covert" and the "passage" to have been of rich materials, and Ahaz to have taken them to eke out his "presents to the king of Assyria." Others render, "removed he into the house of the Lord from fear of the king of Assyria."

19. the rest of the acts of Ahaz] Such as are described in Isai. vii. 10-13; 2 Chr. xxviii. 23-25, xxix. 3, 7.

XVII. 1. In the twelfth year] Cp. xv. 30 note. The history of the kingdom of Israel is in this chapter brought to a close.

2. not as the kings of Israel that were before him] The repentance of a nation, like that of an individual, may be "too late." God is long-suffering; but after national sins have reached a certain height, after admonitions and warnings have been repeatedly rejected, after lesser punishments have failed,—judgment begins to fall. Forces have been set in motion, which nothing but a miracle could stop; and God does not see fit to work a miracle in such a case. Cp. Butler, 'Analogy,' Pt. I. ch. ii. end.

3. Of Shalmaneser, the successor of Tiglath-pileser in the Assyrian Canon, we know little from Assyrian sources, since his records have been mutilated by his successors, the Sargonids, who were of a wholly different family. The archives of Tyre mention him as contemporary with, and warring against, a Tyrian king named Elulæus.

The expedition, referred to here, was probably in the first year of Shalmaneser (B.C. 727). Its main object was the reduction of Phœnicia, which had re-asserted its independence, but (except Tyre) was once more completely reduced. Shalmaneser probably passed on from Phœnicia into Galilee, where he attacked and took Beth-arbel (Arbela of Josephus, now Irbid), treating it with great severity (Hos. x. 14), in order to alarm Hoshea, who forthwith submitted, and became tributary (see marg. rendering and 1 K. iv. 21 note). Shalmaneser then returned into Assyria.

4. So, king of Egypt, is generally identified with Shebek (B.C. 730), the Sabaco of Herodotus. Hoshea's application to him was a return to a policy which had been successful in the reign of Jeroboam I. (1 K. xii. 20 note), but had not been resorted to by any other Israelite monarch. Egypt had for many years been weak, but Sabaco was a conqueror, who at the head of the swarthy hordes of Ethiopia had invaded Egypt and made himself master of the country. In the inscriptions of Shebek he boasts to have received tribute from "the king of Shara" (Syria), which is probably his mode of noticing Hoshea's application. References to the Egyptian proclivities of Hoshea are frequent in the Prophet Hosea (vii. 11, xi. 1, 5, xii. 4). King Hoshea, simultaneously with his reception as a vassal by Sabaco, ceased to pay tribute to Shalmaneser, thus openly rebelling, and provoking the chastisement which followed.

5 him up, and bound him in prison. ¶ Then ^c the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and 6 besieged it three years. ^d In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and ^e carried Israel away into Assyria, ^f and placed them in Halah and in Habor ^g by the river of Gozan, 7 and in the cities of the Medes. For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand 8 of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and ^h walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, 9 which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly ⁱ those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, ^j from the tower of 10 the watchmen to the fenced city. ^k And they set them up ^l images and ^m groves ⁿ in every high hill, and under every green tree:

¹ Heb. *statues*.

^c ch. 18. 9.

^d ch. 18. 10.

Hos. 13. 16,

foretold.

^e Lev. 26. 32,

33.

Deut. 28. 36,

61.

^f 1 Chr. 5. 26.

^g Lev. 18. 3.

Deut. 18. 9.

ch. 10. 3.

^h ch. 18. 8.

ⁱ 1 Kin. 14. 23.

Isai. 57. 5.

^k Ex. 34. 13.

Deut. 16. 21.

Mic. 5. 14.

^l Deut. 12. 2.

ch. 16. 4.

5. *all the land*] The second invasion of Shalmaneser (B.C. 723, his fifth year), is here contrasted with the first, as extending to the whole country, whereas the first had afflicted only a part.

three years] From the fourth to the sixth of Hezekiah, and from the seventh to the ninth of Hoshea; two years, therefore, according to our reckoning, but three, according to that of the Hebrews. This was a long time for so small a place to resist the Assyrians but Samaria was favourably situated on a steep hill; probably Sabacon made some attempts to relieve his vassal; the war with Tyre must have distracted Shalmaneser; and there is reason to believe that before the capture was effected a revolt had broken out at Nineveh which must have claimed Shalmaneser's chief attention, though it did not induce him to abandon his enterprise.

6. *the king of Assyria took Samaria*] i.e., from the Assyrian inscriptions, not Shalmaneser but Sargon, who claims to have captured the city in the first year of his reign (B.C. 721). At first Sargon carried off from Samaria no more than 27,280 prisoners and was so far from depopulating the country that he assessed the tribute on the remaining inhabitants at the same rate as before the conquest. But later in his reign he effected the wholesale deportation here mentioned.

Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan] Rather, "on the Habor, the river of Gozan." Halah is the tract which Ptolemy calls Chalcitis, on the borders of Gauzanitis (Gozan) in the vicinity of the Chaboras, or Khabor (Habor, the great affluent of the Euphrates). In this region is a remarkable mound called *Gla*, which probably marks the site, and represents the name, of the city of Chalach, whence the district Chalcitis was so called.

in the cities of the Medes] Sargon relates that he overran Media, seized and "an-

nexed to Assyria" a number of the towns, and also established in the country a set of fortified posts or colonies.

7. The reasons for which God suffered the Israelites to be deprived of their land and carried into captivity were—1, their idolatries; 2, their rejection of the Law; 3, their disregard of the warning voices of Prophets and seers.

8. Idolatry was worse in the Israelites than in other nations, since it argued not merely folly and a gross carnal spirit, but also black ingratitude (Ex. xx. 2, 3). The writer subdivides the idolatries of the Israelites into two classes, heathen and native—those which they adopted from the nations whom they drove out, and those which their own kings imposed on them. Under the former head would come the great mass of the idolatrous usages described in rr. 9, 10, 11, 17; "the high places" (rr. 9 and 11); the "images" and "groves" (r. 10); the causing of their children to "pass through the fire" (r. 17); and the "worship of the host of heaven" (r. 16): under the latter would fall the principal points in rr. 12, 16, 21.

which they had made] "Which" refers to "statutes." The Israelites had "walked in the statutes of the heathen, and in those of the kings of Israel, which (statutes) they (the kings) had made."

9. Lit., the words run thus—"And the children of Israel concealed (or 'dissembled') words which were not so concerning the Lord their God;" the true meaning of which probably is, the Israelites cloaked or covered their idolatry with the pretence that it was a worship of Jehovah: they glossed it over and dissembled towards God, instead of openly acknowledging their apostasy.

from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city] This phrase was probably a proverbial expression for universality, meaning strictly;—"alike in the most populous and in the most desolate regions." "Towers of watchmen" were built for the protection of the

^m Ex. 20. 3.
 Lev. 26. 1.
 Deut. 5. 7.
ⁿ Deut. 4. 19.
^o 1 Sam. 9. 9.
^p Hos. 12. 6.
 Joel 2. 12.
 Am. 5. 4.
 Is. 1. 16.
 Jer. 18. 11.
^q Deut. 31. 27.
 Prov. 29. 1.
^r Deut. 29. 25.
^s Deut. 32. 21.
 1 Kin. 16. 13.
 1 Cor. 8. 4.
^t Ps. 115. 8.
 Rom. 1. 21.
^u Deut. 12.
 30. 31.
^v Ex. 32. 8.
 1 Kin. 12. 29.
^w 1 Kin. 16. 33.
^x 1 Kin. 16. 31.
 & 22. 53.
 ch. 11. 18.
^y Lev. 18. 21.
 Ezek. 23. 37.

11 and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought
 12 wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: for they served idols, ^mwhereof the LORD had said unto them, "Ye shall not do this thing. ¶ Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, 'by all the prophets, and by all ^othe seers, saying, 'Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.
 14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but ^qhardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in
 15 the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, ^rand his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed ^svanity, and ^tbecame vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they
 16 should ^unot do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and ^vmade them molten images, *even* two calves, ^wand made a grove, and worshipped all the host of
 17 heaven, ^xand served Baal. ^yAnd they caused their sons and

¹ Heb. *by the hand of all.*

flocks and herds which were pastured in waste and desert places (2 Chr. xxvi. 10, xxvii. 4).

11. The burning of incense was a common religious practice among the Egyptians and the Babylonians; and from the present passage we gather that the Canaanitish nations practised it as one of their ordinary sacred rites. The Israelites are frequently reproached with it (Hos. ii. 13, iv. 13; Isai. lxx. 3).

13. God raised up a succession of Prophets and seers, who repeated and enforced the warnings of the Law, and breathed into the old words a new life. Among this succession were, in Israel, Ahijah the Shilonite (1 K. xiv. 2), Jehu the son of Hanani (do. xvi. 1), Elijah, Micaiah the son of Imnah (do. xxii. 8), Elisha, Jonah the son of Amittai (2 K. xiv. 25), Oded (2 Chr. xxviii. 9), Amos, and Hosea; in Judah, up to this time, Shemaiah (2 Chr. xi. 2, xii. 5), Iddo (do. xii. 15, xiii. 22), Azariah the son of Oded (do. xv. 1), Hanani (do. xvi. 7), Jehu his son (do. xix. 2), Jahaziel the son of Zechariah (do. xx. 14), Eliezer the son of Dolavah (do. v. 37), Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (do. xxiv. 20), another Zechariah (do. xxvi. 5), Joel, Micah, and Isaiah, besides several whose names are not known. Some of these persons are called "prophets," others "seers." Occasionally the same person has both titles (as Iddo and Jehu the son of Hanani), which seems to show that there was no very important distinction between them.

Probably the conjecture is right that "prophet" (*nābi*) in strictness designates the official members of the prophetic order only, while "seer" (*chāzeh*) is applicable to all, whether members of the order or not, who receive a prophetic revelation.

14. To "harden" or "stiffen the neck" is a common Hebrew expression significant of unbending obstinacy and determined self-will. See marg. ref.

15. As idols are "vanity" and "nothingness," mere weakness and impotence, so idolaters are "vain" and impotent. Their energies have been wasted, their time mispent; they have missed the real object of their existence; their whole life has been a mistake; and the result is utter powerlessness. Lit., the word rendered "vanity" seems to mean "breath" or "vapour"—a familiar image for nonentity. It occurs frequently in the Prophets, and especially in Jeremiah (*e.g.* ii. 5, viii. 19, xiv. 22, &c.).

16. In v. 10 there is a reference to the old high-place worship, which was professedly a worship of Jehovah, but with unauthorised rites and emblems; here the reference is to Ahab's setting up a grove to Baal in the city of Samaria (marg. ref.).

and worshipped all the host of heaven] Astral worship has not hitherto been mentioned as practised by the Israelites. Moses had warned against it (Deut. iv. 19, xvii. 3), so that it no doubt existed in his day, either among the Canaanitish nations or among the Arabians (Job xxxi. 26-28). Perhaps it was involved to some extent in the Baal worship of the Phœnicians, for Baal and Astarte were probably associated in the minds of their worshippers with the Sun and Moon. Later in the history we shall find a very decided and well-developed astral worship prevalent among the Jews, which is probably Assyro-Babylonian (xxi. 3 note).

17. Cp. xvi. 3 note, and see Lev. xx. 2-5 note.

their daughters to pass through the fire, and ^bused divination and enchantments, and ^csold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. ¶ Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left ^dbut the tribe of Judah only. Also ^eJudah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and ^fdelivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For ^ghe rent Israel from the house of David; and ^hthey made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, ⁱas he had said by all his servants the prophets. ^kSo was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. ¶ And the king of Assyria brought ^lmen ^mfrom Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from ⁿAva, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed

^b Deut. 18. 10.
^c 1 Kin. 21. 20.
^d 1 Kin. 11. 13, 32.
^e Jer. 3. 8.
^f ch. 13. 3. & 15. 20.
^g 1 Kin. 11. 11, 31.
^h 1 Kin. 12. 20, 28.
ⁱ 1 Kin. 14. 16.
^j ver. 6.
^k Ezra 4. 2, 10.
^l See ver. 20.
^m ch. 18. 34.
ⁿ Irah.

19. This verse and the next are parenthetical. Here again, as in r. 13, the writer is led on from his account of the sins and punishment of the Israelites to glance at the similar sins and similar punishment of the Jews.

It was the worst reproach which could be urged against any Jewish king, that he "walked in the way of the kings of Israel" (viii. 18, xvi. 3; 2 Chr. xxi. 6, xxviii. 2). The Baal worship is generally the special sin at which the phrase is levelled; but the meaning here seems to be wider. Cp. Mic. vi. 16.

20. *all the seed of Israel*] The Jews, i.e. as well as the Israelites. God's dealings with both kingdoms were alike. "Spoilers" were sent against each, time after time, before the final ruin came on them—against Israel, Pul and Tiglath-pileser (xv. 19, 20; 1 Chr. v. 26); against Judah, Sennacherib (xviii. 13–16), Esar-haddon (2 Chr. xxxiii. 11), and Nebuchadnezzar thrice.

21. The strong expression "drave Israel" is an allusion to the violent measures whereto Jeroboam had recourse in order to stop the efflux into Judæa of the more religious portion of his subjects (2 Chr. xi. 13–16), the calling in of Shishak, and the permanent assumption of a hostile attitude towards the southern kingdom.

23. *as he had said by all his servants the prophets*] The writer refers not only to the extant prophecies of Moses (Lev. xxvi. 33; Deut. iv. 26, 27, xxviii. 36, &c.), Ahijah the Shilonite (marg. ref.), Hosea (ix. 3, 17), and Amos (vii. 17), but also to the entire series of warnings and predictions which Prophet after Prophet in a long unbroken succession had addressed to the disobedient Israelites (v. 13) on their apostasy, and so leaving them wholly "without excuse" (see r. 13 note).

unto this day] The words, taken in combination with the rest of the chapter, distinctly show that the Israelites had not returned to their land by the time of the composition of the Books of Kings. They show nothing as to their ultimate fate. But on the whole, it would seem probable (1) that the ten tribes never formed a community in their exile, but were scattered from the first; and (2) that their descendants either blended with the heathen and were absorbed, or returned to Palestine with Zerubbabel and Ezra, or became inseparably united with the dispersed Jews in Mesopotamia and the adjacent countries. No discovery, therefore, of the ten tribes is to be expected, nor can works written to prove their identity with any existing race or body of persons be regarded as anything more than ingenious exertations.

24. Sargon is probably the king of Assyria intended, not (as generally supposed) either Shalmaneser or Esar-haddon.

The ruins of Cutha have been discovered about 15 miles north-east of Babylon, at a place which is called Ibrahim, because it is the traditional site of a contest between Abraham and Nimrod. The name of Cutha is found on the bricks of this place, which are mostly of the era of Nebuchadnezzar. The Assyrian inscriptions show that the special god of Cutha was Nergal (v. 30 note).

Ava or Ivah or Ahava (Ezra viii. 15) was on the Euphrates; perhaps the city in ancient times called Ihi or Aia, between Sippara (Sepharvaim) and Hena (Anal).

On Hamath, see 1 K. viii. 65 note. Sepharvaim or Sippara is frequently mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions under the name of *Tsipar* (v. 31 note). The dual form of the Hebrew name is explained by the fact that the town lay on both sides of

- them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.
- 25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them,
- 26 which slew *some* of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God
- 27 of the land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the
- 28 manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el,
- 29 and taught them how they should fear the LORD. ¶ Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation
- 30 in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of ^oBabylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and
- 31 the men of Hamath made Ashima, ^pand the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites ^qburnt their children in fire to

^o ver. 21.

^p Ezra 4. 9.
^q Lev. 18. 21.
Deut. 12. 31.

the river. Its position is marked by the modern village of *Mosab*, about 20 miles from the ruins of Babylon up the course of the stream.

The towns mentioned in this verse were, excepting Hamath, conquered by Sargon in his twelfth year, B.C. 709; and it cannot have been until this time, or a little later, that the transplantation here recorded took place. Hamath had revolted, and been conquered by Sargon in his first year, shortly after the conquest of Samaria.

instead of the children of Israel [This does not mean that the whole population of Samaria was carried off (cp. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 9)]. The writer here, by expressly confining the new comers to the "*cities of Samaria*," seems to imply that the country districts were in other hands.

25. The depopulation of the country, insufficiently remedied by the influx of foreigners, had the natural consequence of multiplying the wild beasts and making them bolder. Probably a certain number had always lurked in the jungle along the course of the Jordan (Jer. xlix. 19, l. 44); and these now ventured into the hill country, and perhaps even into the cities. The colonists regarded their sufferings from the lions as a judgment upon them from "the god of the land" (v. 26; cp. 1 K. xx. 23 note).

27. Carry one of the priests...; let them go and dwell there, and let him teach [The double change of number is curious; but the text needs no emendation. The priest would require to be accompanied by assistants, who would "go and dwell," but would not be qualified to "teach." The *arcana* of the worship would be known to none excepting the priests who had minis-

tered at the two national sanctuaries; cf. Dan and Bethel.

28. The priest sent to the colonists was not a true Jehovah-priest, but one of those who had been attached to the calf-worship, probably at Bethel. Hence, he would be willing to tolerate the mixed religion, which a true Jehovah-priest would have unsparingly condemned.

29. The "Samaritans" here are the Israelites. The temples built by them at the high places (1 K. xii. 31, xiii. 32) had remained standing at the time of their departure. They were now occupied by the new comers, who set up their own worship in the old sanctuaries.

30. Succoth-benoth probably represents a Babylonian goddess called Zir-banit, the wife of Merodach. She and her husband were, next to Bel and Beltis, the favourite divinities of the Babylonians.

Nergal, etymologically "the great man," or "the great hero," was the Babylonian god of war and hunting. His name forms an element in the Babylonian royal appellation, Nergal-shar-ezar or Neriglissar. The Assyrian inscriptions connect Nergal in a very special way with Cutha, of which he was evidently the tutelary deity.

Ashima is ingeniously conjectured to be the same as Esmûn, the Æsculapius of the Cabiri or "great gods" of the Phœnicians.

31. Nibhaz and Tartak are either gods of whom no other notice has come down to us, or intentional corruptions of the Babylonian names Nebo and Tir, the great god of Borsippa, who was the tutelary deity of so many Babylonian kings. The Jews, in their scorn and contempt of polytheism, occasionally and purposely altered, by way of derision, the names of the heathen deities.

- 32 Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in
 33 the houses of the high places. ^aThey feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations ^bwhom
 34 they carried away from thence. Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of
 35 Jacob, ^cwhom he named Israel; with whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, ^d"Ye shall not fear other gods, nor ^ebow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: but the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and ^fa stretched out arm, ^ghim shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do
 37 sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ^hye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.
 38 And the covenant that I have made with you ⁱye shall not
 39 forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of
 40 all your enemies. Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did
 41 after their former manner. ^jSo these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

^a 1 Kin. 12. 31.

^b Zeph. 1. 5.

^c Gen. 32. 28. & 35. 10.

^d 1 Kin. 11. 31.

^e Judg. 6. 10.

^f Ex. 20. 5.

^g & 34. 15.

^h Ex. 6. 6.

ⁱ Deut. 10. 20.

^j Deut. 5. 32.

^k Deut. 4. 23.

^l ver. 32, 33.

¹ Or, who carried them away from thence.

Anammelech is possibly an instance of the same contemptuous play upon words.

Adrammelech, "the glorious king," signifies the sun. The Assyrian inscriptions commonly designate *Tsipar*, or Sepharvaim (v. 24), "Sippara of the Sun." The title "Adrammelech" has not yet been found in the inscriptions hitherto; but it would plainly be a fitting epithet of the great luminary.

The sun-god of the Babylonians, Shamas, was united at Sippara and elsewhere with a sun-goddess, Anunit, whose name may be represented in the Anammelech of the text. The Hebrews, taking enough of this name to show what they meant, assimilated the termination to that of the male deity, thus producing a ridiculous effect, regarded as insulting to the gods in question.

32. *of the lowest of them*] Rather, "from all ranks." See marg. ref. note.

33. Understand the passage thus: "They (the colonists) served their own gods after the manner of the nations from which they (the government) removed them," i.e., after the manner of their own countrymen at home.

34. *they fear not the LORD*] The new comers in one sense feared Jehovah (v. 33, 41). They acknowledged His name, admitted Him among their gods, and kept up His worship at the high place at Bethel according to the rites instituted by Jeroboam (v. 28). But in another sense they did

not fear Him. To acknowledge Jehovah together with other gods is not really to acknowledge Him at all.

37. *which he wrote for you*] It is worth observing here, first, that the author regards the whole Law as given to the Israelites in a written form; and secondly, that he looks on the real writer as God.

41. *their graven images*] The Babylonians appear to have made a very sparing use of animal forms among their religious emblems. They represented the male Sun, Shamas, by a circle, plain or crossed; the female Sun, Anunit, by a six-rayed or eight-rayed star; Nebo by a single wedge or arrow-head, the fundamental element of their writing; the god of the atmosphere by a double or triple thunderbolt. The gods generally were represented under human forms. A few of them had, in addition, animal emblems—the lion, the bull, the eagle, or the serpent; but these seem never to have been set up for worship in temples. There was nothing intentionally grotesque in the Babylonian religion, as there was in the Egyptian and Phœnician.

so do they unto this day] The mixed worship, the union of professed reverence for Jehovah with the grossest idolatry, continued to the time of the composition of this Book, which must have been as late as B.C. 561, or, at any rate, as late as B.C. 580 (xxv. 27). It did not, however, continue much longer. When the Samaritans wished

CHAP. 18. NOW it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that ^aHezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was ^bAbi, the daughter of 3 Zachariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the 4 LORD, according to all that David his father did. ^cHe removed the high places, and brake the ^dimages, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the ^ebrason serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: 5 and he called it ^fNehushtan. He ^gtrusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the 6 kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he ^hclave to the LORD, and departed not ⁱfrom following him, but kept

^a 2 Chr. 23

27.

& 29. 1

He is called

Ezekiah,

Matt. 1. 9.

^b 2 Chr. 23.

1. Abijah.

^c 2 Chr. 31. 1.

^d Num. 21. 9.

^e ch. 19. 10.

Job 13. 15

Ps. 13. 5.

^f ch. 23. 27.

^g Deut. 10. 21.

Josh. 23. 8.

¹ Hob. statues.

² That is, A piece of brass.

³ Hob. from after him.

to join the Jews in rebuilding the Temple (about B.C. 537), they showed that inclination to draw nearer to the Jewish cult which henceforth marked their religious progress. Long before the erection of a temple to Jehovah on Mount Gerizim (B.C. 409) they had laid aside all their idolatrous rites, and, admitting the binding authority of the Pentateuch, had taken upon them the observance of the entire Law.

XVIII. The sacred writer, having now completed the history of the joint kingdom, and having cast his glance forward over the religious history of the mixed race which replaced the Israelites in Samaria, proceeds to apply himself uninterruptedly to the remaining history of the Jewish kingdom.

1. *in the third year*] If Hoshea ascended the throne towards the close of the twelfth year of Ahaz (xvii. 1), and if Ahaz reigned not much more than fifteen years (xvi. 2), the first of Hezekiah might synchronise in part with Hoshea's third year.

Hezekiah] The name given by our translators follows the Greek form, 'Ezekias, rather than the Hebrew, which is *Hizkiah*. Its meaning is "strength of Jehovah."

2. *Twenty and five years old was he*] This statement, combined with that of xvi. 2, would make it necessary that his father Ahaz should have married at the age of ten, and have had a child born to him when he was eleven. This is not impossible; but its improbability is so great, that most commentators suggest a corruption in some of the numbers.

The Zachariah here mentioned was perhaps one of the "faithful witnesses" of Isaiah (viii. 2).

3. *he did that which was right, &c.*] This is said without qualification of only three kings of Judah, Asa (1 K. xv. 11), Hezekiah, and Josiah (2 K. xxii. 2). See some details of Hezekiah's acts at the commencement of his reign in 2 Chr. xxix. &c. It is thought that his reformation was preceded, and perhaps caused, by the prophecy of Micah recorded in Jer. xxvi. 18; Mic. iii. 12.

4. *He removed the high places*] This religious reformation was effected in a violent and tumultuous manner (marg. ref.). The "high places," though forbidden in the Law (Deut. xii. 2-4, 11-14; cp. Lev. xxvi. 30), had practically received the sanction of Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 10; ix. 12-14), David (2 Sam. xv. 32), Solomon (1 K. iii. 4), and others, and had long been the favourite resorts of the mass of the people (see 1 K. iii. 2 note). They were the rural centres for the worship of Jehovah, standing in the place of the later synagogues, and had hitherto been winked at, or rather regarded as legitimate, even by the best kings. Hezekiah's desecration of these time-honoured sanctuaries must have been a rude shock to the feelings of numbers; and indications of the popular discontent may be traced in the appeal of Rab-shakeh (v. 22), and in the strength of the reaction under Manasseh (xxi. 2-9; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 3-17).

the brason serpent] See marg. ref. Its history from the time when it was set up to the date of Hezekiah's reformation is a blank. The present passage favours the supposition that it had been brought by Solomon from Gibeon and placed in the Temple; for it implies a long continued worship of the serpent by the Israelites generally, and not a mere recent worship of it by the Jews.

and he called it Nehushtan] Rather, "And it was called Nehushtan." The people called it, not "the serpent" (*nachash*), but "the brass," or "the brass thing" (*nachushtan*). Probably they did not like to call it "the serpent," on account of the dark associations which were attached to that reptile (Gen. iii. 1-15; Is. xxvii. 1; Ps. xci. 13; &c.).

5. *after him was none like him*] The same is said of Josiah (marg. ref.). The phrase was probably proverbial, and was not taken to mean more than we mean when we say that such and such a king was one of singular piety.

6. Other good kings, as Solomon, Jehosh-

7 his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD ^awas with him; and he ^bprospered whithersoever he went forth: and he ^crebelled against the king of Assyria, and 8 served him not. ^dHe smote the Philistines, *even unto* ^eGaza, and the borders thereof, ^ffrom the tower of the watchmen to 9 the fenced city. ¶ And ^git came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up 10 against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: *even in* the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is ^hthe 11 ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. ⁱAnd the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them ^jin Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the 12 cities of the Medes: ^kbecause they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear 13 them, nor do them. ¶ Now ^lin the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did ^mSennacherib king of Assyria come up against all 14 the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have

^a 2Sam. 5. 10.

^b 1 Sam. 18.

^c 5. 14.

^d Isa. 60. 12.

^e 2 Chr. 16. 7.

^f 1 Chr. 4. 41.

^g Isai. 14. 29.

^h 2 Chr. 17. 3.

ⁱ ch. 17. 3.

^j ch. 17. 6.

^k ch. 17. 6.

^l 1 Chr. 5. 26.

^m ch. 17. 7.

ⁿ Dan. 9. 4, 10.

^o 2 Chr. 12.

^p 1, &c.

^q Isai. 36. 1,

&c.

¹ Heb. *Azza*.

² Heb. *Sunherib*.

aphat, Joash, and Amaziah, had fallen away in their later years. Hezekiah remained firm to the last. The phrase "cleaving to God" is frequent in Deuteronomy, but rare elsewhere.

7. *the LORD was with him*] This had been said of no king since David (marg. ref.). The phrase is very emphatic. The general prosperity of Hezekiah is set forth at some length by the author of Chronicles (2 Chr. xxxii. 23, 27-29). His great influence among the nations bordering on the northern kingdom, was the cause of the first expedition of Sennacherib against him, the Ekronites having expelled an Assyrian viceroy from their city, and delivered him to Hezekiah for safe keeping: an expedition which did not very long precede that of r. 13, which fell towards the close of Hezekiah's long reign.

8. Sargon had established the complete dominion of Assyria over the Philistines. Hence the object of Hezekiah's Philistine campaign was not so much conquest as opposition to the Assyrian power. How successful it was is indicated in the Assyrian records by the number of towns in this quarter which Sennacherib recovered before he proceeded against Jerusalem.

9-12. These verses repeat the account given in the marg. ref. The extreme importance of the event may account for the double insertion.

13. *in the fourteenth year*] This note of time, which places the invasion of Sennacherib eight years only after the capture of Samaria, is hopelessly at variance with the Assyrian dates for the two events, the first of which falls into the first of Sargon, and the second into the fourth of Sennacherib,

twenty-one years later. We have therefore to choose between an entire rejection of the Assyrian chronological data, and an emendation of the present passage. Of the emendations proposed the simplest is to remove the note of time altogether, regarding it as having crept in from the margin.

Sennacherib] This is the Greek form of the Sinakhrib of the inscriptions, the son of Sargon, and his immediate successor in the monarchy. The death of Sargon (B.C. 705) had been followed by a number of revolts. Hezekiah also rebelled, invaded Philistia, and helped the national party in that country to throw off the Assyrian yoke.

From Sennacherib's inscriptions we learn that, having reduced Phœnicia, recovered Ascalon, and defeated an army of Egyptians and Ethiopians at Ekron, he marched against Jerusalem.

the fenced cities] Sennacherib reckons the number taken by him at "forty-six." He seems to have captured on his way to the Holy City a vast number of small towns and villages, whose inhabitants he carried off to the number of 200,000. Cp. Is. xxiv. 1-12. The ground occupied by his main host outside the modern Damascus gate was thenceforth known to the Jews as "the camp of the Assyrians." Details connected with the siege may be gathered from Isai. xxii. and Chronicles (marg. ref. s). After a while Hezekiah resolved on submission. Sennacherib (r. 14) had left his army to continue the siege, and gone in person to Lachish. The Jewish monarch sent his embassy to that town.

14. *return from me*] Or "retire from me," i.e., "withdraw thy troops."

- offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house.
- 15 At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.
- 16 ¶ And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.
- 17 ¶ And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on

"Isai. 7. 3

* 2 Chr. 32.
10, &c.

¹ Heb. *them*.
² Heb. *heavy*.

³ Or, *secretary*.
⁴ Or, *talkest*.
⁵ Heb. *word of the lips*.

⁶ Or, *But counsel and strength are for the war*.

three hundred talents, &c.] According to Sennacherib's own account, the terms of peace were as follows:—(1) A money payment to the amount of 800 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. (2) The surrender of the Ekronite king. (3) A cession of territory towards the west and the south-west, which was apportioned between the kings of Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza.

16. Ahaz had already exhausted the treasures (xvi. 8); Hezekiah was therefore compelled to undo his own work.

17. An interval of time must be placed between this verse and the last. Sennacherib, content with his successes, had returned to Nineveh with his spoil and his numerous captives. Hezekiah, left to himself, repented of his submission, and commenced negotiations with Egypt (vv. 21, 24; Isai. xxx. 2-6, xxxi. 1), which implied treason against his Assyrian suzerain. It was under these circumstances that Sennacherib appears to have made his second expedition into Palestine very soon after the first. Following the usual coast route he passed through Philistia on his way to Egypt, leaving Jerusalem on one side, despising so puny a state, and knowing that the submission of Egypt would involve that of her hangers-on. While, however, he was besieging Lachish on his way to encounter his main enemy, he determined to try the temper of the Jews by means of an embassy, which he accordingly sent.

Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh] None of these are proper names. "Tartan" was the ordinary title of an Assyrian general; "Rab-saris" is "chief eunuch," always a high officer of the Assyrian court;

Rabshakeh is probably "chief cup-bearer." by the conduit of the upper pool] Possibly a conduit on the north side of the city, near the "camp of the Assyrians." The spot was the same as that on which Isaiah had met Ahaz (Isai. vii. 3).

18. when they had called to the king] The ambassadors summoned Hezekiah, as if their rank were equal to his. Careful of his dignity, he responds by sending officers of his court.

Eliakim...which was over the household] Eliakim had been promoted to fill the place of Shebna (Isai. xxii. 20-22). He was a man of very high character. The comptroller of the household, whose position (1 K. iv. 6) must have been a subordinate one in the time of Solomon, appears to have now become the chief minister of the crown. On the "scribe" or secretary, and the "recorder," see 1 K. iv. 3 note.

19. The Rabshakeh, the third in rank of the three Assyrian ambassadors, probably took the prominent part in the conference because he could speak Hebrew (v. 26), whereas the Tartan and the Rabsaris could not do so.

the great king] This title of the monarchs of Assyria is found in use as early as B.C. 1120. Like the title, "king of kings," the distinctive epithet "great" served to mark emphatically the vast difference between the numerous vassal monarchs and the suzerain of whom they held their crowns.

20. Hezekiah no doubt believed that in the "counsel" of Eliakim and Isaiah, and in the "strength" promised him by Egypt, he had resources which justified him in provoking a war.

- 21 whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? ¹ Now, behold, thou ¹trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, ² even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: ³ is not that he, ⁴ whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? Now therefore, I pray thee, give ⁵ pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How thou wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.
- 26 ¶ Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? ⁶ hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink ⁷ their own piss with you? Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: thus saith the king, ⁸ Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: noither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered

¹ Now, 2 Chr. 20.
6, 7.

² ver. 1.
2 Chr. 31. 1.
32. 12.

³ 2 Chr. 32.
15.

¹ Heb. *trustest thee*.

² Or, *hostages*.

³ Heb. *the water of their feet*.

rain words] Lit. as in marg., i.e. a mere word, to which the facts do not correspond.

21. *this bruised reed*] The "tall reed of the Nile bulrush" fitly symbolised the land where it grew. Apparently strong and firm, it was quite unworthy of trust. Let a man lean upon it, and the rotten support instantly gave way, wounding the hand that stayed itself so insecurely. So it was with Egypt throughout the whole period of Jewish history (cp. xvii. 4-6). Her actual practice was to pretend friendship, to hold out hopes of support, and then to fail in time of need.

22. The destruction of numerous shrines and altars where Jehovah had been worshipped (v. 4) seemed to the Rab-shakeh conduct calculated not to secure the favour, but to call forth the anger, of the god. At any rate, it was conduct which he knew had been distasteful to many of Hezekiah's subjects.

23. The phrase translated "give pledges," or "hostages" (marg.) may perhaps be best understood as meaning "make an agreement." If you will "bind yourself to find the riders" (i.e. trained horsemen), we will "bind ourselves to furnish the horses." The suggestion implied that in all Judæa

there were not 2000 men accustomed to serve as cavalry.

25. The Rab-shakeh probably tries the effect of a bold assertion, which had no basis of fact to rest upon.

26. *the Syrian language*] i.e. Aramaic; probably the dialect of Damascus, a Semitic language nearly akin to their own, but sufficiently different to be unintelligible to ordinary Jews.

the people that are on the wall] The conference must have been held immediately outside the wall for the words of the speakers to have been audible.

27. *that they may eat, &c.*] "My master hath sent me," the Rab-shakeh seems to say, "to these men, whom I see stationed on the wall to defend the place and bear the last extremities of a prolonged siege—these men on whom its worst evils will fall, and who have therefore the greatest interest in avoiding it by a timely surrender." He expresses the evils by a strong coarse phrase, suited to the rude soldiery, and well calculated to rouse their feelings. The author of Chronicles has softened down the words (2 Chr. xxxii. 11).

29, 30. There were two grounds, and two only, on which Hezekiah could rest his refusal to surrender, (1) ability to resist by

- 31 into the hand of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, ¹²Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye
- 32 every one the waters of his ³cistern: until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, ^aa land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he ⁴persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.
- ^c ch. 19. 12. 33 ^cHath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ^dWhere are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and ^eIvah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine
- ² Chr. 32. 14. 34 hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, ^fthat the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? ¶ But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's
- ¹ ch. 19. 13. 35 commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which ^gwas over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah ^hwith their clothes rent, and told him the words of
- ³ ch. 17. 24. 36 Rab-shakeh. AND ⁱit came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard ^jit, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, which ^kwas over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to ^lIsaiah
- ⁴ Dan. 3. 15. 37
- ^g Isai. 33. 7. 38
- ^h Isai. 37. 1, &c. 39
- ^b Luke 3. 4, called Esaias. 40
- ¹ Or, Seek my favour. ² Heb. Make with me a ³ blessing, Gen. 32. 20. & 33. 11. Prov. 18. 16. ⁴ Or, pit. ⁵ Or, deceiveth.

his own natural military strength and that of his allies; and (2) expectation based upon the language of Isaiah (xxx. 31, xxxi. 4-9), of supernatural assistance from Jehovah. The Rab-shakeh argues that both grounds of confidence are equally fallacious.

31. *Make an agreement, &c.* Rather, "Make peace with me." The word, which primarily means "blessing," and secondarily "a gift," has also the meaning, though more rarely, of "peace." Probably it acquired this meaning from the fact that a peace was commonly purchased by presents.

cut...drink] A picture of a time of quiet and prosperity, a time when each man might enjoy the fruits of his land, without any fear of the spoiler's violence. The words are in contrast with the latter part of v. 27.

cistern] Rather, "well" (Deut. vi. 11). Each cultivator in Palestine has a "well" dug in some part of his ground, from which he draws water for his own use. "Cisterns," or reservoirs for rain-water, are comparatively rare.

33. The boast is natural. The Assyrians had had an uninterrupted career of success, and might well believe that their gods were more powerful than those of the nations with whom they had warred. It is not surprising that they did not understand that their successes hitherto had been allowed by the very God, Jehovah, against Whom they were now boasting themselves.

34. Arpad was situated somewhere in southern Syria; but it is impossible to fix its exact position. Sargon mentions it in an inscription as joining with Hamath in an act of rebellion, which he chastised. It was probably the capture and destruction of these two cities on this occasion which caused them to be mentioned together here (and in xix. 13, and again in Isaiah x. 9). Sennacherib adduces late examples of the inability of the nations' gods to protect their cities. On the other cities mentioned in this verse, see xvii. 24 notes.

XIX. 1. Hezekiah, like his officers, probably rent his clothes on account of Rab-shakeh's blasphemies: and he put on sackcloth in self-humiliation and in grief. The only hope left was in Jehovah; for Egypt could not be trusted to effect anything of importance. Rab-shakeh's boldness had told upon Hezekiah. He was dispirited and dejected. He perhaps began to doubt whether he had done right in yielding to the bolder counsels of Eliakim and Isaiah. He had not lost his faith in God; but his faith was being severely tried. He wisely went and strove by prayer to strengthen it.

2. Isaiah is here for the first time introduced into the history. His own writings show us how active a part he had taken in it for many years previously. This was the fourth reign since he began his prophesyings; and during two reigns at least, those

- 3 the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and 'blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is 4 not strength to bring forth. 'It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakoh, "whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will 'reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are ²left.
- 5, 6 ¶ So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 'And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the 'servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed; me. Behold, I will send ^aa blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause 8 him to fall by the sword in his own land. ¶ So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: 9 for he had heard that he was departed 'from Lachish. And ^kwhen he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto 10 Hezekiah, saying, 'Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God 'in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of 11 the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly:

^c 2 Sam. 16.^{12.} ch. 18. 37.^d Ps. 50. 21.^f Isai. 37. 6, &c.^v ch. 18. 17.^h ver. 35, 36,^{37.}^{Jer.} 51. 1.ⁱ ch. 18. 14.^k See 1 Sam. 23. 27.^l ch. 18. 5.¹ Or, provocation.² Heb. *fohu*.

of Ahaz and Hezekiah, he had been a familiar counsellor of the monarch. He had probably counselled the revolt from Assyria, and had encouraged the king and people to persevere in their resistance. The exact date of prophecies can seldom be fixed with any certainty; but we can scarcely be mistaken in regarding chs. x. xxx. and xxxi. as written about the time of Hezekiah's second revolt.

3. The "trouble" consisted in "rebuke" (rather, "chastisement,") for sins at the hand of God, and "blasphemy" (rather, "reproach,") at the hands of man.

the children, &c.] i.e. "we are in a fearful extremity—at the last gasp—and lack the strength that might carry us through the danger."

4. will hear] i.e. "will show that he has heard—will notice and punish."

the living God] See 1 Sam. xvii. 26 note.

and will reprove the words] Rather, "will reprove him for the words."

the remnant] i.e. for the kingdom of Judah, the only remnant of God's people that was now left, after Galilee and Gilead and Samaria had all been carried away captive.

7. I will send a blast upon him] Rather, "I will put a spirit in him"—i.e. "I will take from him his present pride and will put in him a new spirit, a spirit of craven fear." Men shall tell him of the destruction that has come upon his host (v. 35), and he shall straightway return, &c.

8. On Lachish and Libnah, see Josh. x. 3, 29 notes. The phrase, "he was departed from Lachish" is suggestive of successful resistance.

9. Tirhakah king of Ethiopia] The *Telrak* or *Teharka* of the hieroglyphics. He was the last king of the 25th or Ethiopian dynasty, which commenced with Shebek or Sabaco, and he reigned upwards of 26 years. The Assyrian inscriptions show that he still ruled in Egypt as late as B.C. 607, when Esarhaddon (v. 37) died, and his son Assurbani-pal succeeded him. He probably ascended the Egyptian throne about B.C. 602, having previously ruled over Ethiopia before he became king of Egypt (cp. Isai. xxxvii. 9). Thus he was probably reigning in Ethiopia at the time of Sennacherib's expedition, while Sethos and perhaps other secondary monarchs bore rule over Egypt. His movements caused Sennacherib to send a second embassy, instead of marching in person against the Jewish king.

11. all lands] This boast is in strict accordance with the general tenor of the Assyrian inscriptions. Hyperbole is the general language of the East; but in this instance it was not so extreme as in some others. The Assyrians under Sargon and Sennacherib had enjoyed an uninterrupted series of military successes: they had succeeded in establishing their pre-eminence from the Median desert to the banks of the Nile, and from the shores of Lake Van to those of the Persian Gulf.

- ^m ch. 18. 33. 12 and shalt thou be delivered? ^m Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of ^a Eden which were
ⁿ Ezek. 27. 23. 13 in Thelasar? ^o Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sopharvaim, of Hona, and
^p Isai. 37. 11, &c. 14 Ivah? ¶ ^p And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house
^q 1 Sam. 4.4. Ps. 101. 1. 15 of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, ^q which dwellest between the cherubims, ^r thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven
^r 1 Kin. 18. 39. Isai. 44. 6. Jer. 10. 10, 11, 12. 16 and earth. LORD, ^s bow down thine ear, and hear: ^t open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, ^u which
^s Ps. 31. 2. 17 hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,
^t 2 Chr. 6. 40. ^u ver. 4. 18 and have ^v cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but ^w the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they
^v Ps. 115. 4. Jer. 10. 3. 19 have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, ^x that all the kingdoms
^w Ps. 63. 18. 20 of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only. ¶ ^y Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, ^z That which thou hast
^x Isai. 37. 21, &c. ^y Ps. 65. 2. 21 prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria ^z I have heard. 21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him;

¹ Heb. *g'ren*.

12. *Haran*] *Harrin*, the Carrhæ of the Greeks and Romans (Gen. xi. 31), was among the earliest conquests of the Assyrians; being subject to them from the 12th century. Its conquest would have naturally followed that of Gozan (Gauzanitis, xvii. 6), which lay between it and Assyria proper.

Rezeph] Probably the Rozappa of the Assyrian inscriptions, a city in the neighbourhood of Haran.

the children of Eden] Or, "the Beni-Eden," who appear from the Assyrian inscriptions to have inhabited the country on the east bank of the Euphrates, about the modern Balis. Here they had a city called Beth-Adina, taken by the Assyrians about B.C. 880. This is probably the "Eden" of marg. ref.

Thelasar] Or Telassar. Probably a city on the Euphrates, near Beth-Adina, called after the name of the god Asshur. The name would signify "the Hill of Asshur."

13. Cp. marg. ref. xvii. 24. Verse 12 refers to former Assyrian successes, verse 13 to comparatively recent ones.

14. *Hezekiah received the letter*] The inscriptions show that scribes accompanied the Assyrian armies, with the materials of their craft, so that such a dispatch might be easily drawn up. As Hezekiah himself "read" it, we may presume that it was in the Hebrew tongue.

15. *which dwellest between the cherubims*] The reference is to the *shechinah*, or miraculous glory, which from time to time appeared above the Mercy-seat from between the two Cherubims, whose wings over-

shadowed the Ark of the Covenant (1 K. vi. 23-27; cp. Ex. xxv. 22; Lev. xvi. 2, &c.).

thou art the God, even thou alone] This is the protest of the pure theist against the intense polytheism of Sennacherib's letter, which assumes that gods are only gods of particular nations, and that Hezekiah's God is but one out of an indefinite number, no stronger or more formidable than the rest.

18. *have cast their gods into the fire*] In general the Assyrians carried off the images of the gods from the temples of the conquered nations, and deposited them in their own shrines, as at once trophies of victory and proof of the superiority of the Assyrian deities over those of their enemies. But sometimes the gods are said to have been "destroyed" or "burnt with fire;" which was probably done when the idols were of rude workmanship or coarse material; and when it was inconvenient to encumber an army with spoils so weighty and difficult of transport.

19. If the mighty army of the great Assyrian king were successfully defied by a petty monarch like Hezekiah, it would force the surrounding nations to confess that the escape was owing to the protecting hand of Jehovah. They would thus be taught, in spite of themselves, that He, and He alone, was the true God.

21. *concerning him*] i.e. "concerning Sennacherib." Verses 21-28 are addressed to the great Assyrian monarch himself, and are God's reply to his proud boastings.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion] Rather, "the virgin daughter, Zion." Zion, the

- The virgin ^bthe daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and ^dlaughed thee to scorn; ^eIs. 23. 10.
^fLam. 2. 13.
 The daughter of Jerusalem ^ghath shaken her head at thee. ^hJob 16. 4.
 22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? ⁱPs. 22. 7, 8.
 And against whom hast thou exalted ^jthy voice, ^kLam. 2. 15.
 And lifted up thine eyes on high?
 Even against ^lthe Holy One of Israel. ^mIsai. 5. 24.
 23 ⁿBy thy messengers thou hast reproached the LORD, and ^och. 18. 17.
 hast said,
 With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the ^pPs. 20. 7.
 height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon,
 And will cut down ^qthe tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice
 fir trees thereof:
 And I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into
^rthe forest of his Carmel.
 24 I have digged and drunk strange waters,
 And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers
 of ^sbesieged places.
 25 ¶ ^tMust thou not heard long ago how ^uI have done it, ^vIsai. 45. 7.

¹ Heb. *By the hand of.*² Heb. *the tallness, &c.*³ Or, *the forest and his fruitful field, Isai. 10. 18.*⁴ Or, *fence?*⁵ Or, *Must thou not heard how I have made it long ago, and formed it of**ancient times? should I now bring it to be laid waste, and fenced cities to be ruinous heaps?*

holy eastern city, is here distinguished from Jerusalem, the western one, and is given the remarkable epithet "virgin," which is not applied to her sister; probably because the true Zion, the city of David, had remained inviolable from David's time, having never been entered by an enemy. Jerusalem, on the other hand, had been taken, both by Shishak (1 K. xiv. 26) and by Jehoash (xiv. 13). The personification of cities as females is a common figure (cp. marg. ref.).

hath shaken her head at thee] This was a gesture of scorn with the Hebrews (cp. marg. ref.; Matt. xxvii. 39).

22. the Holy One of Israel] This is a favourite phrase with Isaiah, in whose prophecies it is found twenty-seven times, while it occurs five times only in the rest of Scripture (Pss. lxxi. 22, lxxviii. 41, lxxxix. 18; Jer. i. 23, li. 5). Its occurrence here is a strong proof—one among many—of the genuineness of the present passage, which is not the composition of the writer of Kings, but an actual prophecy delivered at this time by Isaiah.

23. and hast said] Isaiah clothes in words the thoughts of Sennacherib's heart—thoughts of the extremest self-confidence. Cp. Isai. x. 7-14, where, probably at an earlier date, the same overweening pride is ascribed to this king.

with the multitude of my chariots] There are two readings here, which give, however, nearly the same sense. The more difficult and more poetical of the two is to be preferred. Literally translated it runs—"With chariots upon chariots am I come up, &c."

to the sides of Lebanon] "Lebanon," with

its "cedars" and its "fir-trees," is to be understood here both literally and figuratively. Literally, the hewing of timber in Lebanon was an ordinary feature of an Assyrian expedition into Syria. Figuratively, the mountain represents all the more inaccessible parts of Palestine, and the destruction of its firs and cedars denotes the complete devastation of the entire country from one end to the other.

the lodgings of his borders] Lit., "the lodge of its (Lebanon's) end;" either an actual habitation situated on the highest point of the mountain-range, or a poetical periphrasis for the highest point itself.

the forest of his Carmel] Or, "the forest of its garden"—i.e. "its forest which is like a garden," &c.

24. have digged and drunk ... and dried up] The meaning seems to be—"Mountains do not stop me—I cross them even in my chariots. Deserts do not stop me—I dig wells there, and drink the water. Rivers do not stop me—I pass them as easily as if they were dry land."

the rivers of besieged places] Rather, "the rivers of Egypt." The singular form, *Mazor* (compare the modern *Misr* and the Assyrian *Muzr*), is here used instead of the ordinary dual form, *Mizraim*, perhaps because "Lower Egypt" only is intended. This was so cut up with canals and branches of the Nile, natural and artificial, that it was regarded as impassable for chariots and horses. Sennacherib, however, thought that these many streams would prove no impediments to him; he would advance as fast as if they were "dried up."

25. Hast thou not heard long ago, &c.]

- And of ancient times that I have formed it?
Now have I brought it to pass,
That ^athou shouldst be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous
heaps.
- 26 Therefore their inhabitants were ¹of small power,
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb,
^a *As* ⁴the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it
be grown up.
- ^a Ps. 129. 6. 27 But ¹I know thy ²abode,
And thy going out, and thy coming in,
And thy rage against me.
- 28 Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into
mine ears,
Therefore ¹I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in
thy lips,
And I will turn thee back ²by the way by which thou
camest.
- ¹ Job 41. 2. 29 ¶ And this *shall be* ^aa sign unto thee,
Ezek. 20. 4. ¹Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves,
Amos 4. 2. ²And in the second year that which springeth of the same;
³ver. 33, ⁴And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
36, 37. ⁵And plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.
⁶1 Sam. 2. 31. ⁷° And ³the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah
ch. 20. 8, 9. ⁸Shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit up-
Isai. 7. 11, ward.
14. ⁹For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
Luke 2. 12. ¹⁰And ⁴they that escape out of Mount Zion:
¹¹° 2 Chr. 32. 30 The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.
22, 23. ¹²31
- ^p Isai. 9. 7.

¹ Heb. *short of hand*.² Or, *sitting*.³ Heb. *the escaping of the house of Judah that remaineth*.⁴ Heb. *the escaping*.

Rather, "Hast thou not heard, that from long ago I did this, from ancient times I fashioned it? &c." The former part of the verse refers to the secret Divine decrees, whereby the affairs of this world are determined and ordered from the very beginning of things. Sennacherib's boasting, however, proved that he did not know this, that he did not recognise himself simply as God's instrument—"the rod of His anger" (Isai. x. 5)—but regarded his victories as gained by his own "strength and wisdom" (do. i. 13).

26. The weakness of the nations exposed to the Assyrian attacks was as much owing to the Divine decrees as was the strength of the Assyrians themselves.

the grass on the house tops] Cp. marg. ref. The vegetation on the flat roofs of Oriental houses is the first to spring up and the first to fade away.

27. See 1 K. iii. 7 note.

28. *thy tumult*] Rather, "thy arrogance."

I will put my hook in thy nose] Rather, "my ring." The sculptures show that the kings of Babylon and Assyria were in the habit of actually passing a ring through the flesh of their more distinguished prisoners,

of attaching a thong or a rope to it, and of thus leading them about as with a "bridle." In Assyria the ring was, at least ordinarily, passed through the lower lip; while in Babylonia it appears to have been inserted into the membrane of the nose. Thus Sennacherib would be here threatened with a punishment which he was perhaps in the habit of inflicting.

29. The prophet now once more addresses Hezekiah, and gives him a "sign," or token, whereby he and his may be assured that Sennacherib is indeed bridled, and will not trouble Judæa any more. It was a sign of the continued freedom of the land from attack during the whole of the remainder of Sennacherib's reign—a space of seven-teen years.

30. *the remnant that is escaped*] Terrible ravages seem to have been committed in the first attack (xviii. 13 note). And though the second invasion was comparatively harmless, yet it probably fell heavily on the cities of the west and the south-west. Thus the "escaped" were but "a remnant."

bear fruit upward] The flourishing time of Josiah is the special fulfilment of this prophecy (xxiii. 15-20).

- 32 ¶ Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.
- 33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return,
And shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
- 34 For I will defend this city, to save it,
For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.
- 35 ¶ And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at

ch. 20. 6.
1 Kin. 11.
12, 13.
2 Chr. 32. 21.
Isai. 37. 36.

32. *nor come before it with shield*] The "shields" of the Assyrians are very conspicuous in the sculptures, and were of great importance in a siege, since the assailing archers were in most instances defended, as they shot their weapons, by a comrade, who held before himself and his friend a shield of an enormous size. It was made of a framework of wood, filled in with wadding, and perhaps lined with skin; it was rested upon the ground, and it generally curved backward towards the top; ordinarily it somewhat exceeded the height of a man. From the safe covert afforded by these large defences the archers were able to take deliberate aim, and deliver their volleys with effect.

nor cast a bank against it] "Mounds" or "banks" were among the most common of the means used by the Assyrians against a besieged town. They were thrown up against the walls, and consisted of loose earth, trees, brushwood, stones, and rubbish. Sometimes the surface of the mound was regularly paved with several layers of stone or brick, which formed a solid road or causeway capable of bearing a great weight. The intention was not so much to bring the mounds to a level with the top of the walls, as to carry them to such a height as should enable the battering-ram to work effectively. Walls were made very solid towards their base, for the purpose of resisting the ram; half-way up their structure was comparatively weak and slight. The engines of the assailants, rams and catapults, were therefore far more serviceable if they could attack the upper and weaker portion of the defences; and it was to enable them to reach these portions that the "mounds" were raised.

33. *By the way that he came*] i.e. through the low country of the Shephelah, thus avoiding not only Jerusalem, but even Judæa.

34. *for mine own sake*] God's honour was concerned to defend His own city against one who denied His power in direct terms, as did Sennacherib (xviii. 35, xix. 10-12). His faithfulness was also concerned to keep

the promise made to David (Ps. cxxxii. 12-18).

35. *the camp of the Assyrians*] Which was now moved to Pelusium, if we may trust Herodotus; or which, at any rate, was at some considerable distance from Jerusalem.

when they arose early in the morning, behold, &c.] These words form the only trustworthy data that we possess for determining to any extent the manner of the destruction now wrought. They imply that there was no disturbance during the night, no alarm, no knowledge on the part of the living that their comrades were dying all around them by thousands. All mere natural causes must be rejected, and God must be regarded as having slain the men in their sleep without causing disturbance, either by pestilence or by that "visitation" of which English Law speaks. The most nearly parallel case is the destruction of the first-born (Ex. xii. 29).

The Egyptian version of this event recorded in Herodotus is that, during the night, silently and secretly, an innumerable multitude of field-mice spread themselves through the Assyrian host, and gnawed their quivers, bows, and shield-straps, so as to render them useless. When morning broke, the Assyrians fled hastily, and the Egyptians pursuing put a vast number to the sword.

36. *dwelt at Ninereh*] The meaning is not that Sennacherib made no more expeditions at all, which would be untrue, for his annals show us that he warred in Armenia, Babylonia, Susiana, and Cilicia, during his later years; but that he confined himself to his own part of Asia, and did not invade Palestine or threaten Jerusalem any more. Nineveh, marked by some ruins opposite Mosul, appears here unmistakably as the Assyrian capital, which it became towards the close of the ninth century B.C. It has previously been mentioned only in Genesis (marg. ref.). Sennacherib was the first king who made it his permanent residence. Its great size and large population are marked in the description of Jonah

¹ Gen. 10. 11.
² 2 Chr. 32.
 21.
³ ver. 7.
⁴ Ezra 4. 2.

^a 2 Chr. 32.
 24, &c.
 Isai. 33. 1,
 &c.

^b Neh. 13. 22.
^c Gen. 17. 1.
 1 Kin. 3. 6.

^d 1 Sam. 9. 16.
 & 10. 1.

^e ch. 19. 20.
 Ps. 63. 2.
 / Ps. 39. 12.
 & 50. 8.

37 'Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that ^aAdrammelech and Sharezer his sons ²smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of 'Armenia. And ³Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. 20. IN ^athose days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, ²Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and ³prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have ^cwalked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good* in thy sight. ⁴And Hezekiah wept ³sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle ⁴court, that the word of the LORD ⁵came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah ^athe captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, ^cI have heard thy prayer, I have seen ^dthy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the

¹ Heb. Ararat.

² Heb. Give charge con-

cerning thine house, 2
 Sam. 17. 23.

³ Heb. with a great weeping.
⁴ Or, city.

(iii. 2, 3, iv. 11), whose visit probably fell about B.C. 760.

37. The death of Sennacherib, which took place many years afterwards (B.C. 680), is related here, as, from the divine point of view, the sequel to his Syrian expeditions.

Nisroch his god. Nisroch has not been as yet identified with any known Assyrian deity. The word *may* not be the name of a god at all but the name of the temple, as Josephus understood it. Assyrian temples were almost all distinguished by special names. If this be the true solution, the translation should run—"As he was worshipping his god in the house Nisroch."

they escaped into the land of Armenia Lit. "the land of Ararat," or the north-eastern portion of Armenia, where it adjoined Media. The Assyrian inscriptions show that Armenia was at this time independent of Assyria, and might thus afford a safe refuge to the rebels.

Esar-haddon (or Esar-chaddon), is beyond a doubt the Asshur-akh-iddin of the inscriptions, who calls himself the son, and appears to be the successor of Sin-akh-irib. He commenced his reign by a struggle with his brother Adrammelech, and occupied the throne for only thirteen years, when he was succeeded by his son, Sardanapalus or Asshur-bani-pal. He warred with Phœnicia, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and Media, and built three palaces, one at Nineveh, and the others at Calah and Babylon.

XX. 1. *In those days* Hezekiah seems to have died B.C. 697; and his illness must belong to B.C. 713 or 714 (cp. v. 6), a date which falls early in the reign of Sargon. The true chronological place of this narrative is therefore prior to all the other facts related of Hezekiah except his religious reforms.

the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz] This full description of Isaiah (cp. xix. 2), by the addition of his father's name and of his office, marks the original independence of this narrative. The writer of Kings may have found it altogether separate from the other records of Hezekiah, and added it in the state in which he found it.

This history (cp. Jon. iii. 4-10) shows that the prophetic denunciations were often not absolute predictions of what was certainly about to happen, but designed primarily to prove, or to lead to repentance, those against whom they were uttered, and only obtaining accomplishment if this primary design failed.

2. *he turned his face to the wall*] Contrast 1 K. xxi. 4. Ahab turned in sullenness, because he was too angry to converse; Hezekiah in devotion, because he wished to pray undisturbed.

3. *remember now*] The old Covenant promised temporal prosperity, including length of days, to the righteous. Hezekiah, conscious of his faithfulness and integrity (xviii. 3-6), ventures to expostulate (cp. also xxi. 1 note). According to the highest standard of morality revealed up to this time, there was nothing unseemly in the self-vindication of the monarch, which has many parallels in the Psalms of David (Pss. vii. 3-10, xviii. 19-26, xxvi. 1-8, &c.).

4. *the middle court*] i.e. of the royal palace. This is preferable to the marg. reading.

5. *the captain of my people*] This phrase (which does not occur elsewhere in Kings) is remarkable, and speaks for the authenticity of this full report of the actual words of the Prophet's message (abbreviated in Isai. xxxviii. 1, &c.). The title, "Captain (*negid*) of God's people," commonly used of David,

6 house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years;
 and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king
 of Assyria; and ^gI will defend this city for mine own sake, and ^hch. 19. 34.
 7 for my servant David's sake. And ⁱIsaiah said, Take a lump ^hIsai. 39. 21.
 of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.
 8 ¶ And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, 'What shall be the sign that ⁱSee Isai.
 the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of ^{7. 11, 14.}
 9 the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, ^kThis sign shalt ^kSee Isai.
 thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he ^{38. 7, 8.}
 hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go
 10 back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing
 for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow
 11 return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried
 unto the LORD: and ^lhe brought the shadow ten degrees back- ^lSee Josh.
 12 ward, by which it had gone down in the ^mdial of Ahaz. ¶ ^mAt ^{10. 12, 14.}
 that time ⁿBerodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of ⁿIsai. 38. 8.
ⁿIsai. 39.
 1, &c.

ⁱ Heb. *degrees*.² Or, *Merodach-baladan*.

is applied to Hezekiah, as David's true follower (xviii. 3).

6. The king of Assyria in B.C. 714 and 713 was Sargon (B.C. 721-705). If then the Biblical and Assyrian chronologies which agree exactly in the year of the taking of Samaria (B.C. 721), are to be depended on, the king of Assyria here must have been Sargon. It may be conjectured that he had taken offence at something in the conduct of Hezekiah, and have threatened Jerusalem about this time (cp. Isai. xx. 6). There is, however, no evidence of actual hostilities between Judæa and Assyria in Sargon's reign.

7. *a lump of figs*] The usual remedy in the East, even at the present day, for ordinary boils. But such a remedy would not naturally cure the dangerous tumour or carbuncle from which Hezekiah suffered. Thus the means used in this miracle were means having a tendency towards the result wrought by them, but insufficient of themselves to produce that result (cp. iv. 34 note).

8. *And Hezekiah said*] Previous to the actual recovery Hezekiah, who at first may have felt himself no better, asked for a "sign" that he would indeed be restored to health.

Asking for a sign is a pious or a wicked act according to the spirit in which it is done. No blame is attached to the requests of Gideon (Judg. vi. 17, 37, 39), or to this of Hezekiah, because they were real wishes of the heart expressed humbly. The "evil generation" that "sought for a sign" in our Lord's days did not really want one, but made the demand captiously, neither expecting nor wishing that it should be granted.

9. *ten degrees*] Lit. "ten steps." It is not, perhaps, altogether certain whether the "dial of Ahaz" (x. 11) was really a dial with a gnomon in the centre, and "degrees"

marked round it, or a construction for marking time by means of "steps." Sundials proper had been invented by the Babylonians before the time of Herodotus; but the instrument here was probably an instrument consisting of a set of steps, or stairs, with an obelisk at the top, the shadow of which descended or ascended the steps according as the sun rose higher in the heavens or declined.

The question as to the mode whereby the return of the shadow was produced is one on which many opinions have been held. Recently, it has been urged that the true cause of the phenomenon was a solar eclipse, in which the moon obscured the entire upper limb of the sun; and it has been clearly shown that if such an occurrence took place a little before midday, it would have had the effect described as having taken place—*i.e.* during the obscuration of the sun's upper limb shadows would be sensibly lengthened, and that of the obelisk would descend the stairs; as the obscuration passed off the reverse would take place, shadows would shorten, and that of the obelisk would once more retire up the steps. If this be the true account, the miracle would consist in Isaiah's supernatural foreknowledge of an event which the astronomy of the age was quite incapable of predicting, and in the providential guidance of Hezekiah's will, so that he chose the "sign" which in the natural course of things was about to be manifested.

10. *It is a light thing*] It seemed to Hezekiah comparatively easy that the shadow, which had already begun to lengthen, should merely make a sudden jump in the same direction; but, wholly contrary to all experience that it should change its direction, advancing up the steps again when it had once begun to descend them.

12. *Berodach-baladan*] The correct form of this name, Merodach-baladan, is given

^a 2 Chr. 32.
27.

Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his ¹precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *all* the house of his ²armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, *All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.* And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, *shall* be carried into Babylon: no thing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, *shall* they take away;

^p ch. 24. 13.
& 25. 13.
Jer. 27. 21, 22.
& 52. 17.
^q ch. 24. 12.

¹ Or, *spicery*.

² Or, *jewels*.

³ Heb. *vessels*.

in Isaiah (xxxix. 1). It is a name composed of three elements, *Merodach*, the well-known Babylonian god (Jer. i. 2), *bal* (= *pal*) "a son;" and *iddin*, or *iddina*, "has given;" or *Baladan* may be a form of *Bel-iddin*. This king of Babylon is mentioned frequently in the Assyrian inscriptions, and he was not unknown to the Greeks. He had two reigns in Babylon. First of all, he seized the throne in the same year in which Sargon became king of Assyria, B.C. 721, and held it for 12 years, from B.C. 721 to B.C. 709, when Sargon defeated him, and took him prisoner. Secondly, on the death of Sargon and the accession of Sennacherib, when troubles once more arose in Babylonia, he returned thither, and had another reign, which lasted six months, during a part of the year B.C. 703. As the embassy of Merodach-Baladan followed closely on the illness of Hezekiah, it would probably be in B.C. 713.

[*the son of Baladan*] In the inscriptions Merodach-Baladan is repeatedly called the son of Yakin or Yagin. This, however, is a discrepancy which admits of easy explanation. The Assyrians are not accurate in their accounts of the parentage of foreign kings. With them Jehu is "the son of Omri." Yakin was a prince of some repute, to whose dominions Merodach-baladan had succeeded. The Assyrians would call him Yakin's son, though he might have been his son-in-law, or his grandson.

The embassy was not merely one of congratulation. Its chief object was to inquire with respect to the going back of the shadow, an astronomical marvel in which the Chaldeans of Babylon would feel a keen interest (2 Chr. xxxii. 31). A political purpose is moreover implied in the next verse. Merodach-baladan was probably desirous of

strengthening himself against Assyria by an alliance with Judea and with Egypt.

13. *Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them* [The Jewish king lent a favourable ear to the proposals of the ambassadors, and exhibited to them the resources which he possessed, in order to induce them to report well of him to their master.

all the house of his precious things] Lit. the "spice-house;" the phrase had acquired the more generic sense of "treasure-house" from the fact that the gold, the silver, and the spices were all stored together.

14. Hezekiah did not answer Isaiah's first question, "What said these men?" but only his second. Probably he knew that Isaiah would oppose reliance on an "arm of flesh."

Babylon now for the first time became revealed to the Jews as an actual power in the world, which might effect them politically. As yet even the Prophets had spoken but little of the great southern city; up to this time she had been little more to them than Tyre, or Tarshish, or any other rich and powerful idolatrous city. Henceforth all this was wholly changed. The prophetic utterance of Isaiah on this occasion (*rv.* 16-18) never was, never could be, forgotten. He followed it up with a burst of prophecy (Is. xl.-lxvi.), in which Babylon usurps altogether the place of Assyria as Israel's enemy, and the Captivity being assumed as a matter of certainty, the hopes of the people are directed onward beyond it to the Return. Other Prophets took up the strain and repeated it (Habak. i. 6-11, ii. 5-8; Mic. iv. 10). Babylon thus became henceforth, in lieu of Assyria, the great object of the nation's fear and hatred.

18. This prophecy had two fulfillments,

- and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.
- 19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, "Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, ¹*Is it not good, if peace*
- 20 and truth be in my days? ¶ And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he ²*made a pool, and a conduit,*
- and ³*brought water into the city, are they not written in the*
- 21 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And ⁴*Hezekiah* slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.
- CHAP. 21. MANASSEH ⁵*was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his
- 2 mother's name *was* Hephzi-bah. And he did *that which was* evil
- in the sight of the LORD, ⁶*after the abominations of the heathen,*
- 3 whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places ⁷*which Hezekiah his father had*
- destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove,

¹ 1 Sam. 3. 18.
Job 1. 21.
Ps. 39. 9.
² 2 Chr. 32. 32.
³ Neh. 3. 16.
⁴ 2 Chr. 32. 30.
⁵ 2 Chr. 32. 33.

⁶ 2 Chr. 33. 1, &c.

⁷ ch. 16. 3.

⁸ ch. 18. 4.

¹ Or, *Shall there not be peace and truth, &c.*

each complementary to the other. Manasseh, Hezekiah's *actual son*, was "carried to Babylon" (2 Chr. xxxiii. 11), but did not become a eunuch in the palace. Daniel and others, not his actual sons, but of the royal seed (Dan. i. 3), and therefore Hezekiah's descendants, are thought by some to have literally fulfilled the latter part of the prophecy, being eunuchs in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

19. *Good is the word, &c.*] The language is, according to some, that of a true spirit of resignation and humility; according to others, that of a feeling of relief and satisfaction that the evil was not to come in his day. Such a feeling would be but natural, and though not according to the standard of Christian perfectness, would imply no very great defect of character in one who lived under the old Dispensation.

peace and truth] Rather, "peace and continuance." The evils threatened were war and the dissolution of the kingdom.

20, 21. Consult the marg. reff.

XXI. 1. *Manasseh was twelve years old*] Manasseh, therefore, was not born at the time of Hezekiah's dangerous illness; and it is probable that Hezekiah had at that time no son to succeed him. According to Josephus, this was the principal cause of his grief.

Hephzibah] Jewish tradition makes Hephzibah, Hezekiah's wife, the daughter of Isaiah; but this is scarcely probable. She was, however, no doubt, known to the Prophet, and it may well have been in special compliment to her that Isaiah introduced her name (lxii. 4) as one that Jerusalem would bear after her restoration to God's favour. The name means, "My delight (is) in her."

2. Manasseh during his minority naturally fell under the influence of the chief Jewish nobles, with whom the pure religion of Jehovah was always unpopular (cp.

2 Chr. xxiv. 17, 18; Jer. viii. 1, 2). They seem to have persuaded him, not only to undo Hezekiah's work, but to proceed to lengths in polytheism, magic, and idolatry, unknown before. The sins of Manasseh's reign appear to have been those which filled up the measure of Judah's iniquity, and brought down the final sentence of doom on the last remnant of the chosen people (xxiii. 26; cp. Jer. xv. 4).

3. The first step in the re-establishment of idolatry seems to have been the restoration of the high places where Jehovah was professedly worshipped (xviii. 22), but with idolatrous rites (1 K. xiv. 23). The next was to re-introduce the favourite idolatry of Israel, Baal-worship, which had formerly flourished in Judaea under Athaliah (xi. 18), and Ahaz (2 Chr. xxviii. 2). After this, Manasseh seems to have specially affected Sabaism, which had been previously unknown in Judaea (cp. xvii. 16 and note).

worshipped all the host of heaven] Sabaism, or pure star-worship, without images, and without astrological superstitions, included a reverence for the sun, the moon, the chief stars, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac (xxiii. 5 note). The main worship was by altars, on which incense was burnt (Jer. xix. 13). These altars were placed either upon the ground (v. 5), or upon the house-tops (xxiii. 12; Zeph. i. 5). The sun was worshipped with the face towards the east (Ezek. viii. 16); chariots and horses were dedicated to him (xxiii. 11). The star-worship of the Jews has far more the character of an Arabian than an Assyrian or Chaldean cult. It obtained its hold at a time when Assyria and Babylonia had but little communication with Judaea—i.e. during the reign of Manasseh. It crept in probably from the same quarter as the Molech worship, with which it is here (and in 2 Chr. xxxiii. 3-6) conjoined.

^d 1 Kin. 10.
 32, 33.
^e Deut. 4. 19.
 & 17. 3.
 ch. 17. 16.
^f Jer. 32. 34.
^g 2 Sam. 7. 13.
 1 Kin. 8. 29.
 & 9. 3.
^h Lev. 18. 21.
 & 20. 2.
 ch. 16. 3.
 & 17. 17.
ⁱ Lev. 10. 26.
 31.
 Deut. 18. 10.
 11.
 ch. 17. 17.
^k 2 Sam. 7. 13.
 1 Kin. 8. 29.
 & 9. 3.
 ch. 23. 27.
 Ps. 132. 13,
 14.
 Jer. 32. 34.
^l 2 Sam. 7. 10.
^m Prov. 29.
 12.
ⁿ ch. 23. 26,
 27.
 & 24. 3, 4.
 Jer. 15. 4.
^o 1 Kin. 21. 26.
^p ver. 6.
^q 1 Sam. 3. 11.
 Jer. 19. 3.
^r See Isai.
 31. 11.
 Lam. 2. 8.
 Amos 7. 7, 8.

"as did Ahab king of Israel; and ^eworshipped all the host of
 4 heaven, and served them. And ^fhe built altars in the house of
 the LORD, of which the LORD said, ^gIn Jerusalem will I put my
 5 name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two
 6 courts of the house of the LORD. ^hAnd he made his son pass
 through the fire, and observed ⁱtimes, and used enchantments,
 and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much
 wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger.
 7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the
 house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son,
^kIn this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of
 8 all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: ^lneither will I
 make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I
 gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to
 all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law
 9 that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearkened
 not: and Manasseh ^mseduced them to do more evil than did the
 nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.
 10 ¶ And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, "Bo-
 11 cause Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations,
ⁿand hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which
^owere before him, and ^phath made Judah also to sin with his
 12 idols: therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am
 bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever
 13 heareth of it, both ^qhis ears shall tingle. And I will stretch
 over Jerusalem ^rthe line of Samaria, and the plummet of the
 house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipe the
 14 dish, ^swiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake
 the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the
 hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a
 15 spoil to all their enemies; because they have done *that which*

¹ Heb. *he wipe the and turneth it upon the face thereof.*

4. The "altars" of this verse seem to be the same with those of v. 5, and consequently were not in the Temple building, but in the outer and inner courts.

6. On the meaning of the phrase "passing through the fire," see xvi. 3, and Lev. xx. 2-5.

To "observe times" was forbidden in the Law (marg. ref.), and was no doubt among the modes of divination practised by the Canaanitish nations. It has been explained as, (1) Predicting from the state of the clouds and atmosphere; (2) Fascination with the eye; (3) Watching and catching at chance words as ominous.

dealt with familiar spirits] This practice was forbidden by Moses (Lev. xix. 31) under the penalty of death (do. xx. 27). Its nature is best learnt from Saul's visit to the witch of Endor (1 Sam. xxviii. 7, &c.).

wizards] "Wizards"—literally, "wise men"—are always joined with those who have familiar spirits. Probably they were a sort of necromancers.

7. *a graven image of the grove*] Rather, "the carved work of the Asherah." This Asherah Manasseh placed in the very Tem-

ple itself, whence it was afterwards taken by Josiah to be destroyed (xxiii. 6). Such a profanation was beyond anything that had been done either by Athaliah (xi. 18), or by Ahaz (xvi. 14-18; 2 Chr. xxix. 5-7).

9. During the long reign of Manasseh idolatry in all manner of varied forms took a hold upon the Jewish people such as had never been known before. Cp. Jer. vii. 18, 31; Ezek. xxiii. 37; Zeph. i. 5. The corruption of morals kept pace with the degradation of religion. Cp. xxiii. 7; Zeph. iii. 1-3; Jer. ii. 8, v. 1.

10. *the prophets*] None of the Prophets of this reign are certainly known. One may possibly have been Hosai or Hozai (2 Chr. xxxiii. 19, marg.), who perhaps wrote a life of Manasseh.

13. The general meaning is plain, but the exact force of the metaphor used is not so clear. If the "line" and the "plummet" be "symbols of rule" or law, the meaning will be—"I will apply exactly the same measure and rule to Jerusalem as to Samaria—I will treat both alike with strict and even justice."

- was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.
- 16 ¶ Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem ¹from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD. Now ²the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?
- 17 And ³Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead. ¶ ⁴Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, ⁵as his father Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: and he ⁶forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.
- 18 ¶ And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and ⁷Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

ch. 24. 4.

2 Chr. 33. 11-19.

2 Chr. 33. 20.

2 Chr. 33. 21-23.

ver. 2, &c.

1 Kin. 11. 33.

2 Chr. 33. 24, 25.

Matt. 1. 10, called Josias.

¹ Heb. *from mouth to mouth*.

16. Cp. Jer. ii. 30; Heb. xi. 37; Isai. lvii. 1-4. According to tradition, Isaiah was among the first to perish. More than a century afterwards, the final judgment upon Jerusalem was felt to be in an especial way the punishment of Manasseh's bloody persecution of God's people (marg. ref.).

17. The writer of Kings relates in eighteen verses the history of fifty-five years, and consequently omits numerous facts of great importance in the life of Manasseh. Among the most remarkable of the facts omitted are the capture of Manasseh by the king of Assyria, his removal to Babylon, his repentance there, his restoration to his kingdom, and his religious reforms upon his return to it. These are recorded only in Chronicles (marg. ref., see note). The writer of Kings probably considered the repentance of Manasseh but a half-repentance, followed by a half-reformation, which left untouched the root of the evil.

18. *was buried*] The catacomb of David was probably full, and the later kings, from Ahaz downwards, had to find sepulture elsewhere. Ahaz was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the sepulchres of the kings (2 Chr. xxviii. 27). Hezekiah found a resting-place on the way that led up to David's catacomb (do. xxxii. 33). Manasseh and Amon were interred in "the garden of Uzza," a portion (apparently) of the royal palace-garden; perhaps so called after the name of the previous owner. Josiah

was buried in "his own sepulchre" (xxiii. 30).

Amon his son] This name, which occurs only at this time and in the reign of the idolatrous Ahab (1 K. xxii. 26), is identical in form with the Hebrew representative of the great Egyptian god, Amen or Amun (Nahum iii. 8 marg.); and it is therefore probable that Manasseh selected it and gave it to his son in compliment to the Egyptians.

21. At Manasseh's death, the idolatrous party, held in some check during his later years (2 Chr. xxxiii. 15-17), recovered the entire direction of affairs, and obtained authority from Amon to make once more all the changes which Manasseh had made in the early part of his reign. Hence we find the state of things at Josiah's accession (xxiii. 4-14; Zeph. i. 4-12, iii. 1-7), the exact counterpart of that which had existed under Manasseh.

23. This conspiracy may have been due to the popular reaction against the extreme idolatry which the young king had established.

24. The intention of the conspirators had perhaps been to declare a forfeiture of the crown by the existing line, and to place a new dynasty on the throne. This the people would not suffer. They arrested them and put them to death; and insisted on investing with the royal authority the true heir of David, the eldest son of Amon, though he was a boy only eight years old.

- ^a 2 Chr. 34.1. **CHAP. 22.** JOSIAH ^a was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of ^b Boscath.
- ^b Josh. 15.39. 2 And he did *that which* was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and ^c turned not aside
- ^c Deut. 5.32. 3 to the right hand or to the left. ¶ ^d And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house
- ^d 2 Chr. 34.8, &c. 4 of the LORD, saying, Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is ^e brought into the house of the LORD, which ^f the keepers of the ^g door have gathered of the
- ^e ch. 12.4. 5 people: and let them ^h deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the
- ^f ch. 12.9. 6 house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and
- ^g ch. 12.10. 7 hewn stone to repair the house. Howbeit ⁱ there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their
- ^h ch. 12.11, 12, 14. 8 hand, because they dealt faithfully. ¶ And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, ⁱ I have found the book of
- ⁱ Deut. 31.24, &c. 2 Chr. 31.14, &c.

¹ Heb. threshold.

XXII. 3. *in the eighteenth year*] This is the date of the finding of the Book of the Law and of the Passover (marg. ref., and xxiii. 23), but is not meant to apply to all the various reforms of Josiah as related in xxiii. 4-20. The true chronology of Josiah's reign is to be learnt from 2 Chr. xxxiv. 3-8, xxxv. 1. From these places it appears that at least the greater part of his reforms preceded the finding of the Book of the Law. He began them in the twelfth year of his reign, at the age of twenty, and had accomplished all, or the greater part, by his eighteenth year, when the Book of the Law was found.

Shaphan is mentioned frequently by Jeremiah. He was the father of Ahikam, Jeremiah's friend and protector at the court of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi. 24), and the grandfather of Gedaliah, who was made governor of Judæa by the Babylonians after the destruction of Jerusalem (xxv. 22). Several others of his sons and grandsons were in favour with the later Jewish kings (Jer. xxix. 3, xxxvi. 10-12, 25; Ezek. viii. 11). Shaphan's office was one of great importance, involving very confidential relations with the king (1 K. iv. 3).

4. *Hilkiah*] Hilkiah was the father (or grandfather) of Seraiah (cp. 1 Chr. vi. 13, 14, with Neh. xi. 11), High-Priest at the time of the Captivity (xxv. 18), and ancestor of Ezra the scribe (Ezr. vii. 1).

It is evident from the expressions of this verse that a collection for the repairs of the Temple, similar to that established in the reign of Joash (xii. 9, 10), had been for some considerable time in progress (cp. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 3), and the king now sent to know the result.

5. See marg. ref. The "doers" of the first part of the verse are the contractors,

or overseers, who undertook the general superintendence; they are to be distinguished from a lower class of "doers," the actual labourers, carpenters, and masons of the latter portion of the verse.

which is in the house of the LORD] Rather, "who are," &c.; i.e. the persons who were actually employed in the Temple.

7. *they dealt faithfully*] Cp. marg. ref. The names of these honest overseers are given in Chronicles (2 Chr. xxxiv. 12).

8. Some have concluded from this discovery, either that no "book of the law" had ever existed before, the work now said to have been "found" having been forged for the occasion by Hilkiah; or that all knowledge of the old "book" had been lost, and that a work of unknown date and authorship having been at this time found was accepted as the Law of Moses on account of its contents, and has thus come down to us under his name. But this is to see in the narrative far more than it naturally implies. If Hilkiah had been bold enough and wicked enough to forge, or if he had been foolish enough to accept hastily as the real "book of the law" a composition of which he really knew nothing, there were four means of detecting his error or his fraud:—

(1) The Jewish Liturgies, which embodied large portions of the Law; (2) The memory of living men, which in many instances may have extended to the entire Five Books, as it does now with the modern Samaritans; (3) Other copies, entire or fragmentary, existing among the more learned Jews, or in the Schools of the Prophets; and (4) Quotations from the Law in other works, especially in the Psalmists and Prophets, who refer to it on almost every page.

The copy of the Book of the Law found

- the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book
 9 to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to
 the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy ser-
 vants have gathered the money that was found in the house,
 and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work,
 10 that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. And Sha-
 phan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath
 delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.
 11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the
 12 book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king com-
 manded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan,
 and Achbor the son of Michaiiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and
 13 Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, enquire of the
 LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning
 the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of
 the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have
 not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto
 14 all that which is written concerning us. ¶ So Hilkiah the priest,
 and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto
 Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah,
 the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt
 in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.
 15 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel,
 16 Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold,
 I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants
 thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah

^k *Aldon*,
 2 Chr. 34. 20.

^l Deut. 29. 27.

^m *Tikeath*,
 2 Chr. 31. 12.

ⁿ Deut. 29. 27.
 Dnn. 9. 11.
 12, 13, 14.

¹ Heb. *mettel*.
² Or, *Micah*.

³ Or, *Hasrah*.
⁴ Heb. *garments*.

⁵ Or, in the second part.

by Hilkiah was no doubt that deposited, in accordance with the command of God, by Moses, by the side of the Ark of the Covenant, and kept ordinarily in the Holy of Holies (marg. ref.). It had been lost, or secreted, during the desecration of the Temple by Manasseh, but had not been removed out of the Temple building.

9. *have gathered*] Rather, "have poured out" or "emptied out." The allusion probably is to the emptying of the chest in which all the money collected had been placed (xii. 9).

11. *he rent his clothes*] Partly in grief and horror, like Reuben (Gen. xxxvii. 29) and Job (i. 20), partly in repentance, like Ahab (1 K. xxi. 27).

13. *enquire of the LORD*] As inquiry by Urim and Thummim had ceased—apparently because superseded by prophecy—this order was equivalent to an injunction to seek the presence of a Prophet (cp. iii. 11; 1 K. xxii. 5).

because our fathers have not hearkened] Josiah, it will be observed, assumes that preceding generations had had full opportunity of hearing and knowing the Law. He thus regards the loss as comparatively recent (cp. v. 8 note).

14. *went unto Huldah*] It might have been expected that the royal commissioners would have gone to Jeremiah, on whom the

prophetic spirit had descended in Josiah's thirteenth year (Jer. i. 2), or five years previous to the finding of the Law. Perhaps he was at some distance from Jerusalem at the time; or his office may not yet have been fully recognized.

the prophetess] Cp. the cases of Miriam (Ex. xv. 20; Num. xii. 2) and Deborah (Judg. iv. 4).

keeper of the wardrobe] Lit. "of the robes." Shallum had the superintendence, either of the vestments of the priests who served in the Temple, or of the royal robe-room in which dresses of honour were stored, in case of their being needed for presents (see v. 5 note).

in the college] The marginal translation "in the second part" is preferable; and probably refers to the new or outer city—that which had been enclosed by the wall of Manasseh, to the north of the old city (2 Chr. xxxiii. 14).

16. *all the words of the book*] The "words" here intended are no doubt the threatenings of the Law, particularly those of Lev. xxvi. 16-39 and Deut. xxviii. 15-68. Josiah had probably only heard a portion of the Book of the Law; but that portion had contained those awful denunciations of coming woe. Hence Josiah's rending of his clothes (v. 11), and his hurried message to Huldah.

° Dent. 29.
25, 26, 27.

° 2 Chr. 34.
26, &c.

° Ps. 51. 17.
Isai. 57. 15.
° 1 Kin. 21. 29.

° Lev. 26.
31, 32.
° Jer. 26. 6.
& 44. 22.

" Ps. 37. 37.
Isai. 57. 1, 2.

° 2 Chr. 34.
29, 30, &c.

° ch. 22. 8.
° ch. 11. 14, 17.

17 hath read: °because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands: therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard; because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

CHAP. 23. AND the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. ¶ And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of

¹ Hob. from small even unto great.

17. have burned incense] In the marg. ref. the corresponding phrase is:—"have served other gods, and worshipped them." Its alteration to "have burned incense" points to the fact that the favourite existing idolatry was burning incense on the house-tops to Baal (Jer. xix. 13, xxxii. 29) and to the host of heaven (xii. 3).

19. See marg. ref.

20. in peace] The death of Josiah in battle (xxiii. 29) is in verbal contradiction to this prophecy, but not in real opposition to its spirit, which is simply that the pious prince who has sent to inquire of the Lord, shall be gathered to his fathers before the troubles come upon the land which are to result in her utter desolation. Now those troubles were to come, not from Egypt, but from Babylon; and their commencement was not the invasion of Necho in B.C. 608, but that of Nebuchadnezzar three years later. Thus was Josiah "taken away from the evil to come," and died "in peace" before his city had suffered attack from the really formidable enemy.

XXIII. 2. the prophets] The suggestion to regard this word an error of the pen for "Levites," which occurs in Chronicles (marg. ref.), is unnecessary. For though Zephaniah, Urijah, and Jeremiah are all

that we can name as belonging to the Order at the time, there is no reason to doubt that Judaea contained others whom we cannot name. "Schools of the Prophets" were as common in Judah as in Israel.

he read] The present passage is strong evidence that the Jewish kings could read. The solemn reading of the Law—a practice commanded in the Law itself once in seven years (Deut. xxxi. 10-13),—had been intermitted, at least for the last seventy-five years, from the date of the accession of Manasseh.

3. by a pillar] Rather, "upon the pillar" (see xi. 14, note).

made a covenant] "The covenant." Josiah renewed the old Covenant made between God and His people in Horeb (Deut. v. 2), so far at least as such renewal was possible by the mere act of an individual. He bound himself by a solemn promise to the faithful performance of the entire Law.

with all their heart] "Their" rather than "his," because the king was considered as pledging the whole nation to obedience with himself. He and they "stood to it," i.e. "accepted it, came into the Covenant."

4-20. A parenthesis giving the earlier reforms of Josiah.

4. the priests of the second order] This is a

the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for ^dthe grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and ^ecarried the ashes of them unto Beth-el. And he ^fput down the ^gidolrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the four ^hplanets, and to ⁱall the host of heaven. And he brought out the ^jgrove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon ^kthe graves of the children of the people. And he brake down the houses ^lof the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove ^mhangings for the grove. ¶ And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from ⁿGeba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that

^d ch. 21. 3, 7.^e ch. 21. 3.
^f ch. 21. 7.^g 2 Chr. 34. 4.^h 1 Kin. 14. 24.
ⁱ 15. 12.^j Ezek. 16. 16.^k 1 Kin. 15. 22.¹ Heb. *caused to cease*.² Heb. *Chemarim*, Hos. 10.⁵ Foretold, Zeph. 1. 4.³ Or, *twelve signs*, or, con-*stellat'ons*.⁴ Heb. *houses*.

new expression; and probably refers to the ordinary priests, called here "priests of the second order," in contrast with the High-Priest, whose dignity was reviving (xii. 2 note).

the vessels] This would include the whole apparatus of worship, altars, images, dresses, utensils, &c., for Baal, &c. (xxi. 3-5 notes).

The ashes of the idolatrous objects burnt in the first instance in the "fields of Kidron" (i.e. in the part of the valley which lies north-east of the city, a part much broader than that between the Temple Hill and the Mount of Olives) were actually taken to Bethel, as to an accursed place, and one just beyond the borders of Judah; while those of other objects burnt afterwards were not carried so far, the trouble being great and the need not absolute, but were thrown into the Kidron (r. 12), when there happened to be water to carry them away, or scattered on graves which were already unclean (r. 6). Cp. 1 K. xv. 13.

5. he put down, &c.] or, "He caused to cease the idolatrous priests" (marg.); i.e. he stopped them. The word translated "idolatrous priests" (see marg.) is a rare one, occurring only here and in marg. ref. Here and in Zephaniah it is contrasted with *cohanim*, another class of high-place priests. The *cohanim* were probably "Levitical" the *chemarim* "non-Levitical priests of the high-places." *Chemarim* appears to have been a foreign term, perhaps derived from the Syriac *cāmro*, which means a priest of any kind.

whom the kings of Judah had ordained] The consecration of non-Levitical priests by the kings of Judah (cp. 1 K. xii. 31) had not been previously mentioned; but it is quite

in accordance with the other proceedings of Manasseh and Amon.

the planets] See marginal note, i.e. the "signs of the Zodiac." Cp. Job xxxviii. 32 marg. The word in the original probably means primarily "houses" or "stations," which was the name applied by the Babylonians to their divisions of the Zodiac.

6. The ashes, being polluted and polluting, were thrown upon graves, because there no one could come into contact with them, since graves were avoided as unclean places.

7. by the house of the LORD] This did not arise from intentional desecration, but from the fact that the practices in question were a part of the idolatrous ceremonial, being regarded as pleasing to the gods, and, indeed, as positive acts of worship (cp. marg. ref.).

The "women" were probably the priestesses attached to the worship of Astarte, which was intimately connected with that of the Asherah or "grove." Among their occupations one was the weaving of coverings (lit. "houses" marg.) for the Asherah, which seem to have been of various colours (marg. ref.).

8. Josiah removed the Levitical priests, who had officiated at the various high-places, from the scenes of their idolatries, and brought them to Jerusalem, where their conduct might be watched.

from Geba to Beer-sheba] i.e. from the extreme north to the extreme south of the kingdom of Judah. On Geba see marg. ref. note. The high-place of Beer-sheba had obtained an evil celebrity (Am. v. 5, viii. 14).

the high places of the gates, &c.] Render,

were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

¹ See Eze'k.

41. 10-11.

² 1 Sam. 2.

30.

³ Isai. 30. 33.

Jer. 7. 31.

& 19. 6, 11,

12, 13.

⁴ Josh. 15. 8.

⁵ Lev. 18. 21.

Deut. 18. 10.

Ezek. 23. 37,

39.

⁶ See Jer.

19. 13.

Zeph. 1. 5.

⁷ ch. 21. 5.

- 9 'Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, ⁸but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. ¶ And he defiled ⁹Topheth, which is in ¹⁰the valley of the children of Hinnom, ¹¹that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the ¹²chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. And the altars that were ¹³on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which ¹⁴Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and ¹⁵brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on

¹ Or, *canneth*, or, *officer*.

² Or, *run from thence*.

"He brake down the high-places of the gates, both that which was at the entering in of the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city (1 K. xxii. 26 note), and also that which was on a man's left hand at the gate of the city." According to this, there were only two "high-places of the gates" (or idolatrous shrines erected in the city at gate-towers) at Jerusalem. The "gate of Joshua" is conjectured to have been a gate in the inner wall; and the "gate of the city," the Valley-gate (modern "Jaffa-gate").

9. Nevertheless] Connect this verse with the first clause of v. 8. The priests were treated as if they had been disqualified from serving at the Altar by a bodily blemish (Lev. xxi. 21-23). They were not secularised, but remained in the priestly order and received a maintenance from the ecclesiastical revenues. Contrast with this treatment Josiah's severity towards the priests of the high-places in Samaria, who were sacrificed upon their own altars (v. 20). Probably the high-place worship in Judæa had continued in the main a worship of Jehovah with idolatrous rites, while in Samaria it had degenerated into an actual worship of other gods.

10. The word Topheth, or Tophet—variously derived from *tôph*, "a drum" or "tabour," because the cries of the sacrificed children were drowned by the noise of such instruments; or, from a root *taph* or *tôph*, meaning "to burn"—was a spot in the valley of Hinnom (marg. ref. note). The later Jewish kings, Manasseh and Amon (or, perhaps, Ahaz, 2 Chr. xxviii. 3), had given it over to the Moloch priests for their worship; and here, ever since, the Moloch service had maintained its ground and flourished (marg. ref.).

11. The custom of dedicating a chariot and horses to the Sun is a Persian practice.

There are no traces of it in Assyria; and it is extremely curious to find that it was known to the Jews as early as the reign of Manasseh. The idea of regarding the Sun as a charioteer who drove his horses daily across the sky, so familiar to the Greeks and Romans, may not improbably have been imported from Asia, and may have been at the root of the custom in question. The chariot, or chariots, of the Sun appear to have been used, chiefly if not solely, for sacred processions. They were white, and were drawn probably by white horses. The kings of Judah who gave them were Manasseh and Amon certainly; perhaps Ahaz; perhaps even earlier monarchs, as Joash and Amaziah.

in the suburbs] The expression used here (*parvârim*) is of unknown derivation and occurs nowhere else. A somewhat similar word occurs in 1 Chr. xxvi. 18, viz. *parbar*, which seems to have been a place just outside the western wall of the Temple, and therefore a sort of "purlieu" or "suburb." The *parvârim* of this passage may mean the same place, or it may signify some other "suburb" of the Temple.

12. the upper chamber of Ahaz] Conjectured to be a chamber erected on the flat roof of one of the gateways which led into the Temple Court. It was probably built in order that its roof might be used for the worship of the host of heaven, for which house-tops were considered specially appropriate (cp. marg. ref.).

brake them down from thence] Rather as in margin, i.e. he "hasted and cast the dust into Kidron."

13. On the position of these high-places see 1 K. xi. 7 note. As they were allowed to remain under such kings as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, they were probably among the old high-places where Jehovah had been worshipped blamelessly, or at

- the right hand of ¹the mount of corruption, which ²Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did
 14 the king defile. And he ³brake in pieces the ²images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.
 15 ¶ Moreover the altar that *was* at Beth-el, *and* the high place ⁴“which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the ⁵word of the LORD which
 17 the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* ⁶the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done
 18 against the altar of Beth-el. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones ⁷alone, with the
 19 bones of ⁸the prophet that came out of Samaria. ¶ And all the houses also of the high places that *were* ⁹in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *the LORD* to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the

* 1 Kin. 11.7.

* Ex. 23. 24.
Deut. 7. 5, 25.* 1 Kin. 12.
23, 33.

* 1 Kin. 13.2.

* 1 Kin. 13.
1, 30.

* 1 Kin. 13.31.

* Sec 2 Chr.
31. 6, 7.¹ That is, the mount of Olives.² Heb. *statues*.³ Heb. *to escape*.

least without any consciousness of guilt (see 1 K. iii. 2 note). Manasseh or Amon had however restored them to the condition which they had held in the reign of Solomon, and therefore Josiah would condemn them to a special defilement.

the mount of corruption] See marg. It is suspected that the original name was *Har ham-mishkah*, “mount of anointing,” and that this was changed afterwards, by way of contempt, into *Har ham-mashchith*, “mount of corruption.”

14. The Law attached uncleanness to the “bones of men,” no less than to actual corpses (Num. xix. 16). We may gather from this and other passages (r. 20; 1 K. xiii. 2), that the Jews who rejected the Law were as firm believers in the defilement as those who adhered to the Law.

15. *and burned the high place*] This “high place” is to be distinguished from the altar and the grove (Asherah). It may have been a shrine or tabernacle, either standing by itself or else covering the “grove” (v. 7 note; 1 K. xiv. 23 note). As it was “stamped small to powder,” it must have been made either of metal or stone.

16. To burn human bones was contrary to all the ordinary Jewish feelings with respect to the sanctity of the sepulchre, and had even been denounced as a sin of a heinous character when committed by a king of Moab (Am. ii. 1). Joshua did it, because justified by the Divine command (marg. ref.).

17. *What title is that?*] Rather, “What pillar is that?” The word in the original indicates a short stone pillar, which was set up either as a way-mark (Jer. xxxi. 21), or as a sepulchral monument (Gen. xxxv. 20; Ezek. xxxix. 15).

19. *the cities of Samaria*] The reformation which Josiah effected in Samaria, is narrated in Chronicles. It implies sovereignty to the furthest northern limits of Galilee, and is explained by the general political history of the East during his reign. Between B.C. 632-626 the Scythians ravaged the more northern countries of Armenia, Media, and Cappadocia, and found their way across Mesopotamia to Syria, and thence made an attempt to invade Egypt. As they were neither the fated enemy of Judah, nor had any hand in bringing that enemy into the country, no mention is made of them in the Historical Books of Scripture. It is only in the Prophets that we catch glimpses of the fearful sufferings of the time (Zeph. ii. 4-6; Jer. i. 13-15, vi. 2-5; Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.). The invasion had scarcely gone by, and matters settled into their former position, when the astounding intelligence must have reached Jerusalem that the Assyrian monarchy had fallen; that Nineveh was destroyed, and that her place was to be taken, so far as Syria and Palestine were concerned, by Babylon. This event is fixed about B.C. 625, which seems to be exactly the time during which Josiah was occupied in carry-

- ^b 1 Kin. 13. 2, 32.
^c Ex. 22. 20.
 1 Kin. 18. 40.
 ch. 11. 18.
^d 2 Chr. 34. 5.
^e 2 Chr. 35. 1.
^f Ex. 12. 3.
 Lev. 23. 5.
 Num. 9. 2.
 Deut. 16. 2.
^g 2 Chr. 35.
 18, 19.
^h ch. 21. 6.
- 20 acts that he had done in Beth-el. And ^bhe ^{1c}slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and ^dburned
 21 men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. ¶ And the king commanded all the people, saying, ^eKeep the passover unto the LORD your God, ^fas it is written in the book of this covenant. Surely ^gthere was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days
 22 of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden
 23 to the LORD in Jerusalem. ¶ Moreover ^hthe *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the ²ⁱimages, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of ⁱthe law which were written in the book that
 24 Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. ^kAnd like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there
 25 any like him. ¶ Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, ^lbecause of all the ³provocations that
 26 Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as ^m"I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and
 27 the house of which I said, ⁿ"My name shall be there. ¶ Now
 28 ¹ Or, *sacrifice*. ² Or, *teraphim*, Gen. 31. 19 note. ³ Heb. *angers*.

ing out his reformation in Samaria. The confusion arising in these provinces from the Scythian invasion and the troubles in Assyria was taken advantage of by Josiah to enlarge his own sovereignty. There is every indication that Josiah did, in fact, unite under his rule all the old "land of Israel" except the trans-Jordanic region, and regarded himself as subject to Nabopolassar of Babylon.

20. Here, as in r. 16, Josiah may have regarded himself as bound to act as he did (marg. ref. b). Excepting on account of the prophecy, he would scarcely have slain the priests upon the altars.

21. See r. 4 note. With this verse the author returns to the narrative of what was done in Josiah's 18th year. The need of the injunction, "as it was written in the book of this covenant," was owing to the fact—not that Josiah had as yet held no Passover—but that the reading of the Book had shown him differences between the existing practice and the letter of the Law—differences consequent upon negligence, or upon the fact that tradition had been allowed in various points to override the Law.

22. The details of the Passover are given by the author of Chronicles (marg. ref.). Its superiority to other Passovers seems to have consisted—(1) in the multitudes that attended it; and (2) in the completeness with which all the directions of the Law

were observed in the celebration. Cp. Neh. viii. 17.

24. *perform*] Rather, *establish*. Josiah saw that it was necessary, not only to put down open idolatry, but also to root out the secret practices of a similar character which were sometimes combined with the worship of Jehovah, notwithstanding that the Law forbade them (marg. ref.), and which probably formed, with many, practically almost the whole of their religion.

25. *And like unto him, &c.*] See xviii. 5 note. We must not press the letter of either passage, but regard both kings as placed among the very best of the kings of Judah.

26. See marg. ref. True repentance might have averted God's anger. But the people had sunk into a condition in which a true repentance was no longer possible. Individuals, like Josiah, were sincere, but the mass of the nation, despite their formal renewal of the Covenant (r. 3), and their outward perseverance in Jehovah-worship (2 Chr. xxxiv. 33), had feigned rather than felt repentance. The earlier chapters of Jeremiah are full at once of reproaches which he directs against the people for their insincerity, and of promises if they would repent in earnest.

27. It added to the guilt of Judah that she had had the warning of her sister Israel's example, and had failed to profit by it.

28. Josiah lived 13 years after the celebration of his great Passover. Of this

- the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?
- 29 °In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at ¹ Megiddo, when he ² had seen him. ³ And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And ⁴ the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. ¶ ⁵ Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was ⁶ Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.
- 33 And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands ⁷ at Riblah in the land of Hamath, ⁸ that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and ⁹ put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent

¹ Called *Shallum*, 1 Chr. 3, 15. Jer. 22. 11.

² Or, *because he reigned*.

³ Heb. *set a mule upon the land*, 2 Chr. 36. 3.

° 2Chr. 35. 20.

¹ Zech. 12.

² ch. 14. 8.

³ 2Chr. 35. 24.

⁴ 2Chr. 30

⁶ ch. 21. 18.

⁷ ch. 25. 6.

Jer. 52. 27.

period we know absolutely nothing, except that in the course of it he seems to have submitted himself to Nabopolassar; who, after the fall of Nineveh, was accepted as the legitimate successor of the Assyrian monarchs by all the nations of the western coast. Josiah, after perhaps a little hesitation (see Jer. ii. 18, 36), followed the example of his neighbours, and frankly accepted the position of an Assyro-Babylonian tributary. In this state matters remained till B.C. 608, when the great events happened which are narrated in c. 29.

29. *Pharaoh-Nechoh*] This king is well known to us both from profane historians, and from the Egyptian monuments. He succeeded his father Psammetichus (Psamatik) in the year B.C. 610, and was king of Egypt for 16 years. He was an enlightened and enterprising monarch. The great expedition here mentioned was an attempt to detach from the newly-formed Babylonian empire the important tract of country extending from Egypt to the Euphrates at Carchemish. Calculating probably on the friendship or neutrality of most of the native powers, the Egyptian monarch, having made preparations for the space of two years, set out on his march, probably following the (usual) coast route through Philistia and Sharon, from thence intending to cross by Megiddo into the Jezreel (Esdraelon) plain.

the king of Assyria] This expression does not imply that Nineveh had not yet fallen. The Jews, accustomed to Assyrian monarchs, who held their courts alternately at Nineveh and Babylon (xix. 36; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 11), at first regarded the change as merely dynastic, and transferred to the new king, Nabopolassar, the title which they had been accustomed to give to their former suzerains. When, later on, Nebuchadnezzar invaded their country they found that he did not

call himself "King of Assyria," but "King of Babylon," and thenceforth that title came into use; but the annalist who wrote the life of Josiah immediately upon his death, and whom the author of Kings copied, used, not unnaturally, the more familiar, though less correct, designation.

Josiah went against him] Josiah probably regarded himself as in duty bound to oppose the march of a hostile force through his territory to attack his suzerain. For further details see the account in Chronicles (marg. ref.). On Megiddo, see Josh. xii. 21 note.

30. *dead*] It appears from a comparison of this passage with 2 Chronicles (marg. ref.) that Josiah was not actually killed in the battle.

Jehoahaz] Or Shallum (marg. note). He may have taken the name of Jehoahaz (= "the Lord possesses") on his accession. He was not the eldest son of Josiah (see v. 36 note). The mention of "anointing" here favours the view that there was some irregularity in the succession (see 1 K. i. 34 note).

33. *Pharaoh-Nechoh*, after bringing Phœnicia and Syria under his rule, and penetrating as far as Carchemish, returned to Southern Syria, and learnt what had occurred at Jerusalem in his absence. He sent orders to Jehoahaz to attend the court which he was holding at Riblah, and Jehoahaz fell into the trap (Ezek. xix. 4).

Riblah still retains its name. It is situated on the Orontes, in the Coele-Syrian valley, near the point where the valley opens into a wide and fertile plain. Neco seems to have been the first to perceive its importance. Afterwards Nebuchadnezzar made it his head-quarters during his sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre (xxv. 21; Jer. xxxix. 5, lii. 9, 10, 26).

- * 2 Chr. 36. 1. 34 of gold. And *Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah
 * See ch. 24. 17. king in the room of Josiah his father, and *turned his name to
 Dan. 1. 7. *Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: *and he came to Egypt,
 * Matt. i. 11, 35 and died there. And Jehoiakim gave ^bthe silver and the gold
 called to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money accord-
Jakim. ing to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver
 * Jer. 22. 11. and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according
 12. to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh. ¶^cJehoiakim
 Ezek. 19. 3, 4. 36 was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and
 * ver. 33. he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name
 * 2 Chr. 36. 5. 37 was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. And he
 did that *which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to
 all that his fathers had done.
- * 2 (Irr. 36. 6. CHAP. 24. IN *his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came
 up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he
^b Jer. 25. 9. 2 turned and rebelled against him. ^bAnd the LORD sent against
 & 32. 28. him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands
 Ezek. 10. 8. of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent
 c ch. 20. 17. them against Judah to destroy it, *according to the word of the
 & 21. 12, 13, 3 LORD, which he spake ¹by his servants the prophets. Surely at
 14. the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove
 & 23. 26. them out of his sight, ^dfor the sins of Manasseh, according to
 c ch. 21. 16. 4 all that he did: *and also for the innocent blood that he shed:

¹ Heb. *by the hand of*.

34. in the room of Josiah his father] Not "in the room of Jehoahaz his brother;" the phrase is intended to mark the fact, that Neco did not acknowledge that Jehoahaz had ever been king.

turned his name to Jehoiakim] (p. r. 30 and xxiv. 17. It seems likely, from their purely Jewish character, that the new names of the Jewish kings, though formally imposed by the sovereign, were selected by the individuals themselves. The change now made consisted merely in the substitution of Jehovah for El ("God, Jehovah, will set up"). Both names alike refer to the promise which God made to David (2 Sam. vii. 12) and imply a hope that, notwithstanding the threats of the Prophets, the seed of David would still be allowed to remain upon the throne.

36. *twenty and five years old*] Jehoiakim was therefore two years older than his half-brother, Jehoahaz (c. 31). See his character in r. 37; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 8; Ezek. xix. 5-7; Jer. xxii. 13-17, xxvi. 20-23, xxxvi.

XXIV. 1. *In his days*] i.e. B.C. 605, which was the third completed (Dan. i. 1), and fourth commencing (Jer. xxv. 1), year of Jehoiakim.

Nebuchadnezzar] or Nebuchadrezzar, which is closer to the original, *Nabu-kudurri-usur*. This name, like most Babylonian names, is made up of three elements, *Nebu*, the well-known god (Isai. xli. 1), *kudur*, of doubtful signification (perhaps "crown," perhaps "landmark"), and *usur* "protects." Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, and second monarch of the Babylonian empire,

ascended the throne, B.C. 604, and reigned forty-three years, dying B.C. 561. He married Amulha (or Amyitis), daughter of Cyaxares, king of the Medes, and was the most celebrated of all the Babylonian sovereigns. No other heathen king occupies so much space in Scripture. He was not actual king at this time, but only Crown Prince and leader of the army under his father. As he would be surrounded with all the state and magnificence of a monarch, the Jews would naturally look upon him as actual king.

came up] Nebuchadnezzar began his campaign by attacking and defeating Neco's Egyptians at Carchemish (Jer. xli. 2). He then pressed forward towards the south, overran Syria, Phœnicia, and Judæa, took Jerusalem, and carried off a portion of the inhabitants as prisoners (Dan. i. 1-4): after which he proceeded southwards, and had reached the borders of Egypt when he was suddenly recalled to Babylon by the death of his father.

three years] Probably from B.C. 605 to B.C. 602. Jehoiakim rebelled because he knew Nebuchadnezzar to be engaged in important wars in some other part of Asia.

2. See marg. *reff*. Instead of coming up in person Nebuchadnezzar sent against Jehoiakim his own troops and those of the neighbouring nations.

The ravages of the Moabites and the Ammonites are specially alluded to in the following passages: Jer. xlviii. 26, 27, xlix. 1; Ezek. xxv. 3-6; Zeph. ii. 8.

for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt. ¶ Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nchushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. ¶ At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten

/ See 2 Chr. 36. 6, 8.
Jer. 22. 18, 19.
& 36. 30.
* See Jer. 37. 5, 7.
* Jer. 46. 2.
* 2 Chr. 36. 9.

* Dan. 1. 1.

† Jer. 21. 1.
Ezek. 17. 12.
* Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year, Jer. 25. 1.
* See ch. 23. 27.
* See Jer. 52. 23.
† ch. 20. 17.
Isai. 39. 6.
* See Dan. 5. 2, 3.
* Jer. 20. 5.
* Jer. 21. 1.
† See Jer. 52. 28.

¹ Called Jeconiah, 1 Chr. 3. 16. Jer. 21. 1, and Co-

niah, Jer. 22. 24, 28.
² Heb. came into siege.

³ Or, canuchs

4

5. [Comparing Jer. xxii. 19, xxxvi. 6, 30, and Ezek. xix. 8, 9, it would seem that Nebuchadnezzar must in the fifth or sixth year after Jehoiakim's revolt have determined to go in person to Riblah, to direct operations, first against Tyre and then against Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was taken prisoner, and brought in chains to Nebuchadnezzar, who at first designed to convey him to Babylon, but afterwards had him taken to Jerusalem, where he was executed. Afterwards, when the Babylonians had withdrawn, the remains were collected and interred in the burying-place of Manasseh, so that the king ultimately "slept with his fathers" (v. 6).]

6. [Jehoiachin] Also called Jeconiah and Coniah. Jehoiachin and Jeconiah both mean "Jehovah will establish." Coniah, "Jehovah establishes." Probably his original name was Jehoiachin. When he ascended the throne, and was required to take a new name, anxious not to lose the good men contained in his old one, he simply transposed the two elements. Jeremiah shortened this new name from Jeconiah to Coniah, thus cutting off from it the notion of futurity, to imply that that would not be which the name declared would be. In other words, "Jehovah establishes," but this prince he will not establish.

7. Neco, from the year of the battle of Carchemish, confined himself to his own country and made no efforts to recover Syria or Judaea.

8. his mother's name] On the position of the "queen mother" see 1 K. xv. 10 note. Nehushta's rank and dignity are strongly marked by the distinct and express mention which is made of her in almost every place where her son's history is touched (v. 12; cp. Jer. xxii. 26, xxix. 2).

10. came up against Jerusalem] The cause and circumstances of this siege are equally obscure. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar detected Jehoiachin in some attempt to open communications with Egypt.

12. the eighth year] Jeremiah calls it the seventh year (Jer. lli. 28), a statement which implies only a different manner of counting regnal years.

13. On the first capture of the city in the fourth (third) year of Jehoiakim (Dan. i. 2; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 7), the vessels carried off consisted of smaller and lighter articles; while now the heavier articles, as the Table of Shewbread, the Altar of Incense, the Ark of the Covenant were stripped of their gold, which was carried away by the conquerors. Little remained more precious than brass at the time of the final capture in the reign of Zedekiah (xxv. 13-17).

14. The entire number of the captives was not more than 11,000. They consisted of three classes: (1) the "princes" or "mighty of the land," i.e. courtiers, priests, elders, and all who had any position or dignity—in number 3000 (cp. rr.

^a So 1 Sam.
13. 19, 22.

^{*} ch. 25. 12.
Jer. 40. 7.

² 2 Chr. 36. 10.
ch. 20. 14.
Jer. 22. 21,
&c.

³ See Jer.
52. 23.

^a Jer. 37. 1.
^b 1 Chr. 3. 15.

^c 2 Chr. 36. 10.
^c 2 Chr. 36. 1.

^d 2 Chr. 36. 11
Jer. 37. 1.

^e 52. 1.
^f ch. 23. 31.

^f 2 Chr. 36. 12.

^g 2 Chr. 36. 13.
Ezek. 17. 15.

thousand captives, and ^aall the craftsmen and smiths: none
15 remained, save ^athe poorest sort of the people of the land. And
^bhe carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother,
and the king's wives, and his ^cofficers, and the mighty of the
land, ^dthose carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.
16 And ^eall the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen
and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war,
even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.
17 ^fAnd ^gthe king of Babylon made Mattaniah ^hhis father's
brother king in his stead, and ⁱchanged his name to Zedekiah.
18 ^jZedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to
reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his
mother's name was ^kHamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of
19 Libnah. ^lAnd he did that which was evil in the sight of the
20 LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through
the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah,
until he had cast them out from his presence, ^mthat Zedekiah
rebelled against the king of Babylon.

¹ Or, eunuchs.

14, 16). (2) The "mighty men of valour" or "men of might," i.e. the soldier class, who were 7000. And (3) craftsmen or artisans, who numbered 1000. The word here translated "craftsmen" denotes artisans in stone, wood, or metal, and thus includes our "masons, carpenters, and smiths." The word translated "smiths" means strictly "lock-smiths." The object of carrying off these persons was twofold: (1) it deprived the conquered city of those artisans who were of most service in war; and (2) it gave the conqueror a number of valuable assistants in the construction of his buildings and other great works. The Assyrian monarchs frequently record their removal of the skilled artisans from a conquered country. The population of the ancient city has been calculated, from its area, at 15,000. The remnant left was therefore about 5000 or 6000.

15. *the mighty of the land*] Or "the great," "the powerful." The word used is quite distinct from that in *rr.* 14 and 16. It refers, not to bodily strength or fitness for war, but to civil rank or dignity. The term would include all civil and all ecclesiastical functionaries—the nobles, courtiers, and elders of the city on the one hand, the priests, Prophets (among them, Ezekiel), and Levites on the other.

17. Mattaniah, son of Josiah and brother of Jehoiachaz, but thirteen years his junior, adopted a name significant of the blessings promised by Jeremiah to the reign of a king whose name should be "Jehovah, our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 5-8).

19. *he did that which was evil*] The character of Zedekiah seems to have been weak rather than wicked. Consult Jer. xxxiv., xxxvii. His chief recorded sins were: (1) his refusal to be guided in his political conduct by Jeremiah's counsels, while never-

theless he admitted him to be a true Jehovah-Prophet; and (2) his infraction of the allegiance which he had sworn to Nebuchadnezzar.

20. *it came to pass*] Some prefer "came this to pass:" in the sense, "Through the anger of the Lord was it that another bad king ruled in Jerusalem and in Judah:" concluding the chapter with the word "presence;" and beginning the next chapter with the words, "And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."

rebelled] The Book of Jeremiah explains the causes of rebellion. In Zedekiah's early years there was an impression, both at Jerusalem (Jer. xxviii. 1-11) and at Babylon (do. xxix. 5-28), that Nebuchadnezzar was inclined to relent. By embassy to Babylon (do. xxix. 3), and a personal visit (do. li. 59), Zedekiah strove hard to obtain the restoration of the captives and the holy vessels. But he found Nebuchadnezzar obdurate. Zedekiah returned to his own country greatly angered against his suzerain, and immediately proceeded to plot a rebellion. He sought the alliance of the kings of Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Edom (do. xxvii. 3), and made overtures to Hophra, in Egypt, which were favourably received (Ezek. xvii. 15), whereupon he openly revolted, apparently in his ninth year, B.C. 588. Tyre, it must be remembered, was all this time defying the power of Nebuchadnezzar, and thus setting an example of successful revolt very encouraging to the neighbouring states. Nebuchadnezzar, while constantly maintaining an army in Syria, and continuing year after year his attempts to reduce Tyre (cp. Ezek. xxix. 18) was, it would seem, too much occupied with other matters, such, probably, as the reduction of Susiana (Jer. xlix. 34-38), to devote more than a small share of his attention to his extreme western

CHAP. 25. AND it came to pass ^ain the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it 2 round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year 3 of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth *day* of the ^bfourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the 4 people of the land. And ^cthe city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and ^dthe king went the way 5 toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his 6 army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon ^eto Riblah; and they 7 ^fgave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and ^gput out the eyes of Zedekiah, and

^a 2Chr. 33. 17.
Jer. 34. 2.
& 39. 1.
& 52. 4, 5.

^b Jer. 30. 2.
& 52. 6.

^c Jer. 30. 2.
& 52. 7, &c.

^d Jer. 30.
4-7.
& 52. 7.
Ezek. 12. 12.

^e Jer. 52. 9.

^f Jer. 30. 7.

¹ Heb. *spoke judgment with him.*

² Heb. *made blind.*

frontier. In that same year, however (B.C. 588), the new attitude taken by Egypt induced him to direct to that quarter the main force of the Empire, and to take the field in person.

XXV. 1. *in the ninth year, &c.*] As the final catastrophe approaches, the historian becomes more close and exact in his dates, marking not only the year, but the *month* and the *day*, on which the siege began, no less than those on which it closed (*v.* 3). From Ezek. xxiv. 1 we find that on the very day when the host of Nebuchadnezzar made its appearance before Jerusalem the fact was revealed to Ezekiel in Babylonia, and the fate of the city announced to him (*do. rr.* 6-14). The army seems to have at first spread itself over all Judæa. It fought, not only against Jerusalem, but especially against Lachish and Azekah (*Jer.* xxxiv. 7), two cities of the south (2 Chr. xi. 9), which had probably been strongly garrisoned in order to maintain the communication with Egypt. This division of the Babylonian forces encouraged Hophra to put his troops in motion and advance to the relief of his Jewish allies (*Jer.* xxxvii. 5). On hearing this, Nebuchadnezzar broke up from before Jerusalem and marched probably to Azekah and Lachish. The Egyptians shrank back, returned into their own country (*Jer.* xxxvii. 7; *Ezek.* xvii. 17), and took no further part in the war. Nebuchadnezzar then led back his army, and once more invested the city. (It is uncertain whether the date at the beginning of this verse refers to the first or to the second investment.)

[*forts*] Probably moveable towers, sometimes provided with battering-rams, which the besiegers advanced against the walls, thus bringing their fighting men on a level with their antagonists. Such towers were seen in the Assyrian sculptures.

2. The siege lasted almost exactly a year

and a half. Its calamities—famine, pestilence, and intense suffering—are best understood from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, written probably almost immediately after the capture.

4. *the city was broken up*] Rather, "broken into," i.e. A breach was made about midnight in the northern wall (*Ezek.* ix. 2), and an entry effected into the second or lower city (xxii. 14 note), which was protected by the wall of Manasseh (2 Chr. xxxiii. 14).

Precipitate flight followed on the advance of the Babylonians to the "middle gate," or gate of communication between the upper and the lower cities. This position was only a little north of the royal palace, which the king therefore quitted. He escaped by the royal garden at the junction of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys, passing between the two walls which skirted on either side the valley of the Tyropæon.

toward the plain] "The Arabah" or the great depression which bounds Palestine Proper on the east (*Num.* xxi. 4 note). The "way toward the Arabah" is here the road leading eastward over Olivet to Bethany and Jericho.

5. Jeremiah (xxxviii. 23) and Ezekiel (xii. 13) had prophesied this capture; and the latter had also prophesied the dispersion of the troops (*v.* 14).

6. *to Riblah*] See xxiii. 33 note. A position whence Nebuchadnezzar could most conveniently superintend the operations against Tyre and Jerusalem. In the absence of the monarch, the siege of Jerusalem was conducted by a number of his officers, the chief of whom were Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, and Nergal-shar-ezer (Neriglissar), the Rab-mag (*Jer.* xxxix. 3, 13).

7. *before his eyes*] This refinement of cruelty seems to have especially shocked the Jews, whose manners were less bar-

⁹ See Jer.

52. 12-14.

^h See ch. 21.

12.

¹⁰ ver. 27.

ⁱ Jer. 39. 9.

^k 2^d Chr. 36. 19.

^l Jer. 39. 8.

^m Amos 2. 5.

ⁿ Neh. 1. 3.

^o Jer. 52. 14.

^p Jer. 39. 9.

^q 52. 15.

^r ch. 24. 14.

^s Jer. 39. 10.

^t 40. 7.

^u 52. 16.

^v ch. 20. 17.

^w Jer. 27. 19, 22.

^x 1 Kin. 7. 15.

^y 1 Kin. 7. 27.

^z 1 Kin. 7. 23.

^{aa} Ex. 27. 3.

^{ab} 1 Kin. 7. 45.

^{ac} 50.

^{ad} 1 Kin. 7. 47.

^{ae} 1 Kin. 7. 15.

^{af} Jer. 52. 21.

- bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.
- 8 ¶ And in the fifth month, ⁹ on the seventh day of the month, which is ^h the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, ⁱ came Nebuzar-adan, ^j captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: ^k and he burnt the house of the LORD, ^l and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.
- 9 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, ^m brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.
- 11 ¶ Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the ⁿ fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away. But the captain of the guard ^o left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. ¶ And ^p the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and ^q the bases, and ^r the brazen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. And ^s the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, ^t in gold, and of silver, ^u in silver, the captain of the guard took away. The two pillars, ^v one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; ^w the brass of all these vessels was without weight. ^x The

¹ Or, chief marshal.

² Heb. fallen away.

³ Heb. the one sea.

barons than those of most Orientals. It is noted by Jeremiah in two places (xxxix. 6, lii. 10).

and put out the eyes of Zedekiah] Blinding has always been among the most common of secondary punishments in the East (cp. Judg. xvi. 21). The blinding of Zedekiah reconciled in a very remarkable way prophecies, apparently contradictory, which had been made concerning him. Jeremiah had prophesied distinctly that he would be carried to Babylon (xxxii. 5, xxxiv. 3). Ezekiel had said that he should not "see Babylon" (xii. 13). His deprivation of sight before he was carried to the conqueror's capital fulfilled the predictions of both Prophets.

with fetters of brass] Lit. (see Jer. xxxix. 7 marg.), "with two chains of brass." The Assyrians' captives are usually represented as bound hand and foot—the two hands secured by one chain, the two feet by another. According to Jewish tradition Zedekiah was, like other slaves, forced to work in a mill at Babylon. Jeremiah tells us that he was kept in prison till he died (lii. 11).

8. the nineteenth year of king N.] B.C. 586, if we count from the real date of his accession (B.C. 604); but B.C. 587, if, with the Jews, we regard him as beginning to reign when he was sent by his father to recover Syria and gained the battle of Carchemish (in B.C. 605).

captain of the guard] Lit., "the chief of the executioners" (Gen. xxxvii. 36).

9. he burnt the house of the LORD] Cp. the

prophecies of Jeremiah (xxi. 10, xxxiv. 2, xxxviii. 18, 23). Psalm lxxix. is thought to have been written soon after this destruction of the Temple.

11. the fugitives &c.] It was from a fear of the treatment which he would receive at the hands of these deserters that Zedekiah persisted in defending the city to the last (Jer. xxxviii. 19).

12. There was probably an intention of sending colonists into the country from some other part of the Empire, as the Assyrians had done in Samaria (xvii. 24).

13. the pillars of brass, &c.] All the more precious treasures had been already removed from the Temple (xxiv. 13). But there still remained many things, the list of which is given in Jer. lii. 17-23 much more fully than in this place. Objects in brass, or rather bronze, were frequently carried off by the Assyrians from the conquered nations. Bronze was highly valued, being the chief material both for arms and implements. The breaking up of the pillars, bases, &c., shows that it was for the material, and not for the workmanship, that they were valued. On the various articles consult the marg. ref.

16. without weight] The Babylonians did not take the trouble to weigh the brass as they did the gold and silver. In the Assyrian monuments there are representations of the weighing of captured articles in gold and silver in the presence of the royal scribes.

17. Compare with this description the accounts in marg. ref. The height of the

- height of the one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it *was* brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second
- 18 pillar with wreathen work. ¶^a And the captain of the guard took ^aSeraiah the chief priest, and ^aZeplaniah the second
- 19 priest, and the three keepers of the ¹door: and out of the city he took an ²officer that was set over the men of war, and ^bfive men of them that ³were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the ⁴principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of
- 20 the land that were found in the city: and Nebuzar-adan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of
- 21 Babylon to Riblah: and the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. ^cSo Judah was
- 22 carried away out of their land. ¶^d And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of
- 23 Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. And when all the ^ecaptains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Cariah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophah-

^a Jer. 52. 21, &c.
^b 1 Chr. 6. 11.
^c Ezra 7. 1.
^d Jer. 21. 1.
^e 20. 25.
^f See Jer. 52. 25.

^c Lev. 26. 33.
^d Dent. 28. 34, 64.
^e Jer. 23. 27.
^f Jer. 40. 5.
^g Jer. 40. 7, 8, 9.

¹ Heb. *threshold*.
² Or, *emuch*.

³ Heb. *was the king's face*,
 Esth. 1. 14.

⁴ Or, *scribe of the captain of the host*.

capital ("three cubits") must be corrected, in accordance with those passages, to "five cubits."

18. It devolved on Nebuzaradan to select for exemplary punishment the persons whom he regarded as most guilty, either in respect of the original rebellion or of the protracted resistance. Instead of taking indiscriminately the first comers, he first selected those who by their offices would be likely to have had most authority—the High Priest; the second priest (xxiii. 4 note); three of the Temple Levites; the commandant of the city; five members of the king's Privy Council (or seven, see r. 19 note); and the secretary (or adjutant) of the captain of the host. To these he added sixty others, who were accounted "princes." Compared with the many occasions on which Assyrian and Persian conquerors put to death hundreds or thousands after taking a revolted town, Nebuzaradan (and Nebuchadnezzar) must be regarded as moderate, or even merciful, in their vengeance. Cp. Jer. xl. 2-5.

the three keepers of the door] Rather, "three keepers." The Hebrew has no article. The Temple "door-keepers" in the time of Solomon numbered twenty-four (1 Chr. xxvi. 17, 18), who were probably under six chiefs. After the Captivity the chiefs are either six (Ez. ii. 42; Neh. vii. 45) or four (1 Chr. ix. 17).

19. *out of the city*] This clause shows that the five persons mentioned in r. 18 were taken out of the Temple.

five men] Or, "seven men," according to

Jer. lli. 25. It is impossible to say which of the two numbers is correct.

of them that were in the king's presence] See marg. A mode of speech arising from the custom of Eastern rulers to withdraw themselves as much as possible from the view of their subjects.

21. *So Judah was carried away*] The kingdom of the two tribes was at an end; and the task of the historian might seem to be accomplished. He still, however, desires to notice two things: (1) the fate of the remnant (rr. 22-26) left in the land by Nebuzaradan; and (2) the fate of Johoiachin, who, of all those led into captivity, was the least to blame (rr. 27-30).

22. We may be allowed to conjecture that Jeremiah, in gratitude for Ahikam's service to himself (Jer. xxvi. 24), recommended his son Gedaliah to Nebuzaradan, and through him to Nebuchadnezzar, for the office of governor.

23. *the captains of the armies*] i.e. the officers of the troops who had fled from Jerusalem with Zedekiah (r. 4), and had then dispersed and gone into hiding (r. 5).

For Mizpah, see Josh. xviii. 26 note. *the Netophathite*] Netophah, the city of Ephai (cp. Jer. xl. 8), appears to have been in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem (Neh. vii. 26; Ezr. ii. 21, 22). The name is perhaps continued in the modern *Antubeh*, about 2½ miles S.S.E. of Jerusalem.

a Maachathite] Maachah lay in the stony country east of the upper Jordan, bordering upon Bashan (Deut. iii. 14).

- thite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their
 24 men. And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said
 unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell
 in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well
 f Jer. 41. 1, 2. 25 with you. But ¹it came to pass in the seventh month, that
 Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed
 'royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that
 he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at
 26 Mizpah. And all the people, both small and great, and the
 captains of the armies, arose, ²and came to Egypt: for they
 g Jer. 43. 1, 7. 27 were afraid of the Chaldees. ¶ ³And it came to pass in the
 h Jer. 52. 31, 28 seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of
 & c. Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of
 the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that
 i See Gen. 40. 13, 20. 28 he began to reign ⁴did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of
 Judah out of prison; and he spake ²kindly to him, and set his
 throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in
 k 2 Sam. 9. 7. 29 Babylon; and changed his prison garments: and he did ⁴eat
 30 bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his
 allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, a
 daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

¹ Heb. of the kingdom.² Heb. good things with him.

24. As rebels against the Babylonian king, their lives were forfeit. Gedaliah pledged himself to them by oath, that, if they gave no further cause of complaint, their past offences should be forgiven.

25, 26. Jeremiah gives this history with much fulness of detail (xli-xliii).

27. The captivity of Jehoiachin commenced in the year B.C. 597—the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. It terminated B.C. 561—the first year of Evil-merodach, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. He reigned only two years, being murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, or Nergal-shar-ezer. He is said to have provoked his fate by lawless government and intemperance.

28. *the kings that were with him*] Probably captive kings, like Jehoiachin himself. Cp. Judg. i. 7.

29. Evil-merodach gave him garments befitting his rank. To dress a man suitably to his position was the first thought of an Oriental (Gen. xli. 42; Esth. viii. 15; Dan. v. 29; Luke xv. 22). So again, Oriental kings regarded it as a part of their greatness to feed daily a vast multitude of persons at their Courts (see 1 K. iv. 22, 23). Of these, as here, a certain number had the special privilege of sitting actually at the royal board, while the others ate separately, generally at a lower level. See Judg. i. 7; 2 Sam. ix. 13; 1 K. ii. 7; Ps. xli. 9.

30. *allowance*] From the treasury, in order to enable him to maintain the state proper to his rank, and in addition to his food at the royal table. Jehoiachin, to the day of his death, lived in peace and comfort at the court of Babylon (cp. Jer. lii. 34).